1992

American Civil Religion and the Presidential Rhetoric of Jimmy Carter.

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Order Number 9302888

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The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical Col., 1992

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Ann Arbor, MI 48106

AMERICAN CIVIL RELIGION AND THE PRESIDENTIAL RHETORIC OF JIMMY CARTER

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Speech Communication

by
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August 1992

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would not find myself at this place in my journey if it had not been for the many persons in my circle of family and friends who have loved and supported me so well. I am especially grateful to Larry and Ruby Adee for their generous support throughout my graduate study and teaching career.

This project would not have been completed without my director, Dr. Andrew King, who inspired hope and confidence, a man whose unique blend of intelligence and kindness I admire. I count it a privilege to have had so many hours of conversation with him. He is truly a mentor. I would also like to acknowledge the investment of my committee and their contributions, in particular, Dr. Kenneth Zagacki for the challenge he has offered me throughout my graduate study.

Many friends have encouraged me and I am grateful for them. I especially want to acknowledge Barry Pitts, Regina Hoffman, Dr. Donald P. Lee, Dr. Bennie Coates, Darren Whatley, and Linda Lee.

I dedicate this work to the memory of my mother:

Mary Doris Walker Adee

She loved me and others with an unconditional love. She brought hope, and laughter, and joy to my life. She taught me to believe in myself, my abilities, and in making a

difference in the world. Her legacy to me includes a sense of justice, compassion, and optimism.

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ABSTRACT

Scholars have long speculated about the role of American civil religion and political discourse. Of particular interest to rhetorical scholars is the function of a civil religion idiom within presidential discourse.

The cornerstone of this study is founded upon Rod Hart's ideas in The Political Pulpit (1977) wherein the nature of American civil religion is described through the metaphor of a legal contract. A rhetorical approach to civil religion provides the framework for this study. Nine major public speeches by Carter as candidate and president, from 1974 to 1979, are examined in order to locate and identify the symbolic breeches of the historic separation of church and state. Carter's rhetorical choices clearly indicate a unique and creative use of American civil religion. This usage is unconventional insomuch as he extends the boundaries that characterize the norms of civil-religious discourse. This unconventional usage can be understood as nominal, doctrinal, and structural violations of the American civil-religious code. It seems that Carter renegotiates the boundaries between the sacred and the secular, church and state. This study presents evidence that civil religion is a tradition in flux.

The examination of Carter's use of the civil-religious idiom, one of the supposed catalysts for the

emergence of the 'religious right,' is the focus of this study. Their mobilization for Carter in 1976 and their defection to Ronald Reagan in 1980 and 1984 is partly explained by Carter's separation of his administration from the religious right's agenda. Through the application of the notion of a rhetorical contract, this study provides cogent explanation for Carter's darkhorse yet successful campaign in 1976, and the overwhelming defeat by Reagan in 1980.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Background

Scholars have long speculated about the role of American civil religion in political discourse. Of particular interest has been the function of a civil religion idiom within presidential rhetoric. Much scholarly discussion has focused on the presence of "god terms" in political rhetoric and the routine fusion of political and religious symbols. Many scholars have argued that despite our official separation of church and state, political discourse is an arena in which the sacred and the secular are inextricably bound.

This study is limited to an examination of the modern American presidency and the existence of American civil religion in the twentieth century. The status of civil-religious discourse and the separation of church and state in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is uncertain.

The Study in Context

Ever since Robert N. Bellah borrowed the phrase from Rousseau in his seminal article "Civil Religion in America" (1967) scholars have been speculating about the role of American civil religion in political discourse. Of particular interest to rhetorical scholars has been the

function of a civil religion idiom within presidential discourse.

Bellah noted that despite the historic separation of church and state, presidents have routinely called upon the "Supreme Being" to guide and sanctify the nation. Following Bellah's lead, Campbell and Jamieson have noted the powerful 'function' of a generic religious imagery that is not specifically associated with any single faith or creed, especially in the case of quasi-epideictic addresses like presidential inaugurals. Examples of the effectiveness of this discourse abound: religious language serves political agenda as in the case of Franklin Delano Roosevelt 1932 inaugural where the call for radical political action and greatly expanded power appeared softened by the utterly conventional use of High Church religious rhetoric; Abraham Lincoln's placement of himself and the nation under God's command diminishes the divisiveness of partisan victory in his Second Inaugural. Likewise, Thomas Jefferson's constant references to the "Benevolent Creator" also performed a vital function in transforming a party program into a continental or national program.

Bellah described the language of civil religion as an expression of a common Judeo-Christian consensus. He wrote: "Behind the civil religion at every point lie biblical archetypes: Exodus, Chosen People, Promised Land,

New Jerusalem, sacrificial death and rebirth" (Bellah, 1967, p. 5). Whether facing war, depression, natural disaster or civil strife, presidents have routinely evoked these archetypes. For their part, citizens seem to find these religious depictions of civic events to be emotionally satisfying and conventionally appropriate.

While noting its broad use, strategic funtion and continued attraction for presidential speakers, scholars have also warned of the dangers of civil-religious discourse. Ernest Bormann described the care that a political orator must exercise in his use of the "restoration" fantasy theme in American public address, a type which remains "venerable and powerful" because its religious imagery errs on the side of abstraction and conversatism (Bormann, 1982, pp. 133-145). Similarly, Campbell and Jamieson discuss civil-religious discourse in a way that carefully relegates its correct domain to moments when the president gracefully surrenders to "a higher power" or engages in "acknowledging limits," rhetorical moves that emphasize the legitimacy of the office rather than the expansion of executive power or the personal fortunes of the president (Campbell & Jamieson, 1985, p. 402).

Clearly civil-religious discourse is a sensitive subject and scholars have repeatedly emphasized the need for sensitivity to a delicate balance and fragile

boundaries. Indeed, James David Fairbanks discusses in "Religious Dimensions of Presidential Leadership" (1982) the watchfulness that presidents and their writers have exercised in holding this balance. Eisenhower's speeches are his major data. In reviewing the Eisenhower corpus, Fairbanks notes that while abstract religious language abounds, the speeches very rarely employ sermonic structure (Fairbanks, 1982, p. 263). Religious discourse had a 'place' within political discourse, and its range of sites, topics, and ritual argot were apparently well understood.

Most scholars believe that until the middle 1970s presidents were successful in honoring the delicate balance and they were rewarded for doing so. Civil-religious discourse expressed, affirmed, and activated a well-understood and stable relagionship between church and state. The abstract and mythic character of the religious rhetoric preserved the formal separation of the two spheres. Without compromising its authority to any special religious interest, the state was allowed to appropriate the moral authority of the church on occasions of communal ceremony or national crisis.

However, the domains of religion and politics are dynamic domains and the massive changes in the world and in the nation constantly threatened to erode or rupture their contractual alliance. As late as the 1970s Rod Hart could assure us that civil-religious discourse represented a

stable and enduring set of rules of the game for politicians. Hart was a brilliant scholar, but not as good as a prophet. The domestic upheaval was upon the nation even as his book went to press. It is instructive to recall that Hart proposed it as a world model to accommodate cultural and creedal differences even as Muslim Fundamentalism exploded in the Middle East.

Within the Nation, two events threatened the civil-religious traditions: (1) the recrudesence of fundamentalist groups with political programs, and (2) the nomination and subsequent election of Jimmy Carter, a devout Baptist steeped in the oral tradition of Protestant Christianity.

The entry of the fundamentalist bloc into American politics and its eventual transformation into a 'religious right' has been the subject of numerous books. A smaller literature has speculated about Carter's impact of the recruitment of the right and its subsequent defection to Ronald Reagan. What has remained utterly unexamined is Jimmy Carter's actual use of the civil-religious idiom, one of the supposed catalysts for the emergence of the Christian Right. The examination of Carter's civil-religious discourse is the focus of this study.

Question

Scholarly claims about the pervasiveness of American civil religion and its presumed impact within the political

arena justify a study of this nature. This significant, increasing body of presidential civil-religious discourse, and the president's ability to renegotiate the historic church/state relationship through the use of this generic discourse further justifies this study.

University of Texas scholar Roderick P. Hart's significant work The Political Pulpit (1977) has identified a discourse tradition explaining the presence of American civil religion within political discourse. Hart has defined American civil religion as the ritualized maintenance of the contract between religion and government (Hart, 1977, p. 64). Accordingly, American civil-religious discourse is the public expression of the contractual enactment of this sacred-secular understanding. This balance between government and an increasingly pluralistic religious heritage is constantly being affirmed, re-enacted, and gradually re-negotiated through American civil-religious discourse.

Religion and Carter's "born-again" candidacy became one of the key issues in the 1976 Presidential campaign. Clearly Carter and his campaign team disrupted that balance between religion and government. The purpose of this study is to analyze James Earl Carter, Jr.'s strategic use of American civil-religious discourse during his campaign and presidency. Emphasis will be placed upon its appeal to evangelical voters and its impact upon our historic church

and state covenant. Moreover, this study will seek to locate and identify sacred-secular violations within Carter's discourse.

Theory and Scope

This study is grounded in the perspective that discourse is a speech act. That is, our political relationships are constantly being recycled, legitimized, and even renegotiated through presidential discourse (Denton, 1982, p. 7). Rhetoric is enactment.

There are two presuppositions that supply the necessary context for this particular study. The first presupposition is that Jimmy Carter bears reponsibility for mobilizing a substantial segment of socially conservative evangelical voters on behalf of his candidacy (Hahn, 1980, p. 62). Second, it is also presumed that as President, Carter subsequently disillusioned these voters, many of whom then became supporters of Ronald Reagan in the 1980 election (Hahn, 1984, p. 281).

This study proposes to examine the nature of the overtures Carter made to these voters during his campaign and his continuing relationship with them during his one-term presidency. Since a President acts largely through discourse, especially in an electronic media age, my method will be to identify the nature and function of the messages addressed to this audience as they arose within the context of Carter's major campaign and presidential addresses.

A generic form exists for the analysis of this type of civil-religious discourse. American civil religion, as developed by Robert Bellah, Rod Hart, and others, will help to pose and answer the following questions:

1. Did Carter construct messages intended for an evangelical audience within obstensibly political discourse?
2. Were there "evangelical forms" within Carter's discourse that made particular overtures to such voters?
3. What was the nature of the relationship between church and state as envisioned in Carter's rhetoric?
4. Did Carter's discourse manifest certain speech acts that suggested a violation or weakening of the historic separation of church and state contract?
5. Did Carter extend covert promises to evangelicals within his discourse, and what assumptions and implications about Carter's positions on socio-ethical issues were encouraged by the formal expectations inherent in American civil religious discourse?

Justification

This study may be justified on four grounds: First, it deals with a perenially important issue in the United

States, separation of church and state. Second, it focuses upon a relatively brief period during which a presidential candidate and later president seemed to be signaling a substantial change in the church-state relationship (i.e., a Christian Presidency). Third, while other scholars have studied Presidential discourse to monitor the broad outline of this relationship, this study will examine the specific language forms through which a new church-state relationship was envisioned, if not ultimately negotiated. In this way, the pioneering work of Robert Bellah and Rod Hart on the rhetoric of civil religion may be extended, perhaps even challenged. Fourth and finally, this study will make a rigorous examination of American civil religious discourse as a genre. Although suggested in the work of Rod Hart, the formal and thematic features of this discourse have not been described. It is here that the author's long familiarity with the special conventions of evangelical rhetoric may be particularly useful.

Methodology

The evaluation of Carter's discourse will involve close textual analysis of nine major addresses. These addresses will come from Carter as 1976 presidential candidate and as our thirty-ninth President. Characteristically evangelical forms, images, and appeals will be identified and their function within the text will be analyzed. While Rod Hart's "rhetorical contract" will

provide the evaluative guide for the discourse, evangelical form criticism will be employed in cataloging and describing its religious features.

Definitions

Four primary definitions will clarify the nature of this study: (1) rhetoric, (2) American civil religion, (3) the Presidency, (4) the "rhetorical contract."

Rhetoric. Since classical times the debate over the nature, purposes, and virtues of rhetoric has remained unresolved. Many have considered rhetoric to be mere suasory, others see rhetoric as only ornamentation within discourse that obscures truth. Great thinkers across the ages have offered definitions of rhetoric. Aristotle defined rhetoric as "the discovery of the available means of persuasion." Plato understood rhetoric as the "art of enchanting the soul with words." Francis Bacon described rhetoric as "the application of reason to imagination for the better moving of the will." Kenneth Burke has explained rhetoric as "the use of symbols to induce cooperation in men." Chaim Perelman has argued that the purpose of rhetoric is "to intensify an adherence to values, to create a disposition to act, and finally to bring people to act" (Golden, Berquist, & Coleman, 1984, p. 406). Rhetoric, then, is the strategic use of communication to achieve specified goals. Rhetoric is essential to our understanding of how we come to know,

believe, and act. Rhetoric is not only the "vehicle" that carries information, but it is actually the dynamic process by which we create, discover, transmit, and interpret information, symbols, and ideas. There are six primary constituent elements in this rhetorical process: (1) rhetor, or speaker; (2) his or her "world-view"; (3) message; (4) audience; (5) exigence; (6) situation, or context.

The concept of rhetorical situation began with Kenneth Burke who believed that "rhetorical works are strategic, stylized answers to questions posed by the situation in which they arise" (Brock, 1980, p. 381). Lloyd Bitzer further identified the characteristics of a rhetorical situation. These characteristics are evident in Bitzer's definition of rhetorical situation:

> Rhetorical situation may be defined as a complex of persons, events, objects, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence which can be completely or partially removed if discourse, introduced into the situation, can so constrain human decision or action as to bring about the significant modification of the exigence. (1968, p. 2)

Bitzer's concept of rhetorical situation emphasizes motive and the interplay of the constituent elements in the rhetorical process. Exigences act as agents that "call forth" responses in the form of discourse. The nature of the discourse may vary due to differing world-view and perception of the exigence on the part of the rhetor and the audience. A particular situation may also be

influenced by similar situations and antecedent rhetorical forms (Jamieson, 1973, p. 163). Nevertheless, rhetoric can be understood as a strategic response to a certain exigence in a particular situation. For the purposes of this study examples of discourse created and influenced by their rhetorical situations would be a campaign speech or advertisement, the convention acceptance address, a Presidential inaugural, or discourse addressing a domestic or foreign crisis.

American civil religion. American civil religion is the term that sociologist Robert Bellah has applied to the long-standing tradition of religious-civil discourse in American public life. Bellah has defined American civil religion as "the religious symbol system which related the citizen's role and American society's place in space, time, and history to the conditions of ultimate existence and meaning" (1967, p. 4). This public religious dimension is expressed in a set of beliefs, symbols, and rituals that combine to form a fairly well-institutionalized civil religion in America.

A number of historians and politicians over the years have influenced the American public to hold a special view of itself as a nation (Bellah, 1985, p. 28). When our country has become identified as a "special nation," a "Christian nation," and a "chosen nation," then the American people become "the chosen people," people of

destiny. This perspective has often been supported by the prevailing viewpoint that the United States was founded for the purpose of religious liberty or perhaps religious toleration, not to mention the economic and social benefits of leaving the Old World. This religious heritage is one of the primary images or symbols that many, if not the overwhelming majority of politicians and presidents employ in their practice of civil religion. American civil religion is complete with its (1) patriarchs: George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson and the other "Founding Fathers"; (2) its sacred documents: the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, and the Constitution; and (3) its martyred patron saints: Abraham Lincoln, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, and Martin Luther King, Jr.

According to Will Herberg there are three basic tenets that form the structure of American civil religion. The first tenet is a belief in God. Nationwide polls consistently indicate that 97-98% of the American public profess belief in God. The second tenet is a belief in the "American Way" or in the American system. Capitalism, the Protestant work ethic, and democracy are structures that combine to form the American Way. The third tenet is the Judeo-Christian tradition which offers both religious toleration and also reinforcement for Protestant, Catholic, Jewish faiths (Herberg, 1967, p. 475). American civil

religion actually supports the plurality of religions by offering a transcendent, generic structure which supersedes the diversity of religions within our culture. In reality, the pluralistic nature of our society and government might not be possible without this American civil religion.

American civil religion is not to be confused with "real religion." American civil religion is a symbolic construction used to explain and describe the existence of religious discourse within the larger framework of politics and political discourse. This public piety or civil religion is not personal piety and private religion.

The Presidency. The Presidency is at the center of political life in America. Citizens view the President not only as the Chief Executive, but also as the "moral leader" of the country. The President is not only spokesman but also our representative to the world. The President becomes "a symbol of our national aspirations, our national mood, our national prestige" (Windt, 1983, p. 1). The President is believed to be among the most powerful of persons not only in the country but in the world.

The President has two areas of power available to him: (1) constitutional, and (2) rhetorical. He has constitutional authority as chief executive and administrator as well as commander-in-chief in wartime. He has legislative power through his role as leader of his political party in Congress. Richard Neustadt has argued

that "Presidential power is the power to persuade" (1960, p. 10). While Neustadt limited his study to how presidents attempt to persuade the executive and legislative branches of government, persuasive power is exercised in the public domain as well. According to Theodore Windt these powers "depend upon a greater, more fundamental power - public opinion. Marshalling public support is a distinctly rhetorical power available to the President" (1983, p. 2). A President's rhetorical power then is contingent upon his ability to influence public opinion and therefore gain, maintain, or lose public support.

The Presidency is much more than just our nation's highest political office, more than the position as chief executive, and more than the victor in our political party system. The Presidency is more than the sum of its parts. The American Presidency is an institution characterized by the symbolic, mythic nature of the office and influenced by the individual and collective expectations of its electorate. Robert E. Denton (1982) has argued for a symbolic-interactionist perspective of the American Presidency. The dimensions of this symbolic interaction that comprise "the Presidency" include the ideas, values, and expectations of the following: (1) individual citizens; (2) the general public or society; and (3) the specific persons who seek and/or hold the office, especially as they modify their own behavior to meet their public's

expectations of Presidential behavior (1982, p. 9). Moreover, each Presidential hopeful and office-holder creates, alters, or reinforces individual and public expectations through discourse, use of symbols, rituals, and his or her own particular sense of history. Denton's concept of the symbolic-interactionist Presidency related to expectations and the public domain is further understood by the following:

> The Presidency is a product of interaction. The institution is comprised of the public's historic, mythic perceptions and expectations of the office. It "grows" as individual occupants and situations mold, shape, create, and reinforce various public perceptions and expectations of the office. The Presidency is not what goes on behind closed doors. Its true significance and impact lies in the public domain. (Denton, 1982, p. 8)

The American President is prophet, priest, or king depending upon the expectation or the situation (Novak, 1976, p. 302). The President's power is derived ultimately from his power to persuade. The office itself has been granted certain powers by the Constitution, but the real power is explained by the phenomenon called the "rhetorical Presidency."

Rhetorical Contract. Of central importance to this study is Rod Hart's book, The Political Pulpit. Hart described the nature of American civil religion through the metaphor of legal contract. Hart has characterized the situation between the American public and her politicians in terms of a "rhetorical contract." A "balance" must be

maintained between government and religion according to Hart's construct. The idea of balance between government and religion may certainly have antecedent forms in the early documents of our country's founding. The most significant feature of Hart's work is his rhetorical approach to civil religion. Hart's focus is on enactment, reaffirmation, and recycling of our civil-religious understanding through political discourse (Hart, 1977, pp. 43-45).

Summary

This chapter has introduced the research question and the background, context, and justification of the study. It has also described the methodology and offered four primary definitions that clarify the nature of this study: rhetoric; American civil religion; the Presidency; and the rhetorical contract. The next chapter will offer a biography of Jimmy Carter.

CHAPTER TWO

Biography: The Development of Jimmy Carter's Political-Religious Vision

Introduction

President Carter's accomodation of religious belief and political action was the product of a lifetime of experience and reflection. In 1983, Carter himself declared: "There is no way to understand me and my political philosophy without understanding my faith" (Shaw, 1983, p. 16). His articulation of the relationship between religion and politics had deep roots. His conception grew out of a particular religious tradition, and it was powerfully influenced by his region, family, education and by the exigencies of his several careers. In addition, it was affected by the vast changes through which the United States passed during the two decades before his presidency. Accordingly, this chapter will discuss the evolution of President Carter's 'political-religious voice' through a series of historical, biographical, and theological categories.

Family

James Earl Carter, Jr. was born in Sumter County in the small town of Plains, Georgia, on October 1, 1924, the son of James Earl Carter, Sr. and the former Lillian Gordy. He was an eighth-generation Georgian whose ancestors,

including cotton farmers, merchants, and Civil War soldiers, had lived in the southwestern part of the state for one hundred-fifty years.

His father had been the manager of a grocery store and owner of the town's ice-house and dry-cleaning business prior to buying land outside of Plains and establishing a business selling farm supplies and buying peanuts from local farmers for resale. In addition to his local businesses, he also served as a representative to Georgia's state legislature until his death in 1953.

Carter's mother, a nurse, was active in local social causes. She joined the Peace Corps in 1967 and served for two years in India on birth-control information projects (Moritz, 1971, p. 83).

Jimmy Carter was the first-born son and oldest of four children. When Jimmy was two years old his first sister, Gloria Carter Spann, was born. Of the four Carter children, Gloria has maintained the lowest profile and she has continued to make her home in southern Georgia.

Ruth Carter Stapleton, the second sister, achieved some acclaim as a lay Baptist minister who traveled the country lecturing on faith healing. She is the author of a book on that subject The Gift of Inner Healing (1976). She joined the rest of the Carter family in campaigning for her brother and she would figure prominently in highlighting his faith and his ability to render 'spiritual leadership.'

The fourth and last Carter child born to Earl and Lillian was Jimmy's youngest sibling and only brother, William Alton Carter, III, better known as "Billy." Billy Carter had always been more of a "good ol' boy" than his brother Jimmy who was remembered as the "bookworm" of the family by his public high school classmates. Billy remained in Plains, involved in both the family businesses and a local service station, until his recent death to cancer.

Carter grew up in a largely rural culture and attended the small public Plains High School where he played basketball and graduated in 1941 as the class valedictorian at the age of sixteen. His classmates remembered him as a brilliant student who surpassed them academically with little effort and as a member of the debating team. In his autobiography Why Not the Best, Carter recalled that his workmates and playmates on the farm were black, while his schoolmates were white, and he retained a capacity for friendships that crossed racial lines throughout his life. According to Carter, his father provided him with loving, personal support illustrated by his father's nickname for him - "Hot," for "Hotshot" because "Daddy never assumed I would fail at anything" (Moritz, 1978, p. 100).

Gloria Carter Spann, Carter's closest sibling in age, upon reflection of their growing up, told biographer Kandy Stroud, author of How Jimmy Won (1977): "He wasn't shy, he

was little. He was only five feet three when he went away to college. He was never really aggressive either until recently. He was never a leader except in the family because he was the oldest". Carter himself told Stroud: "Yes, I was shy, but a better word would be isolated . . . my life was centered on the farm" (Moritz, 1978, p. 101).

Carter's country and small-town roots, and his family, would play a prominent role in his presidential campaign. The Carter clan campaigned vigorously alongside Jimmy and his wife, Rosalynn. Carter's ordinary and to some, eccentric, family provided a striking contrast to the typical "Presidential" families.

Education

Carter studied for a year at Georgia Southwestern College in Americus, then for another year at the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta, taking prerequisite mathematics courses for admission to the United States Naval Academy. For Carter, going to the academy at Annapolis in 1943 was a childhood-long goal, partly inspired by his late uncle Tom Gordy who had been a career Navy man. He graduated from Annapolis with a B.S. degree and a commission in the top tenth of his class, ranked fifty-nine out of eight hundred and twenty. Unlike the majority of our presidents whose formal education has been predominantly literary and historical, Carter's essential training was in engineering.

After two years of naval service on battleships, he transferred to the submarine service in 1948. In 1951, Carter applied for admission to the nuclear submarine program under Admiral Hyman G. Rickover. Rickover would later become a major role model as evidenced in Carter's writings. Carter was assigned to be a senior officer in the precommissioning crew of the "Sea Wolf," the second atomic submarine built, while he also studied nuclear physics and engineering at Union College, Schenectady, New York. Carter continued to serve in the Navy until 1953 attaining the rank of lieutenant (Moritz, 1978, p. 101).

Career

Since he was a young boy, Carter had aspired to become the Chief of Naval Operations, but upon his father's death in 1953 Carter ended his military service and returned to Georgia. Carter returned to Plains where his father had played significant roles in business, church, civic affairs and politics. Carter took over the family businesses and he rebuilt them. He expanded the seed and fertilizer businesses, applied new scientific techniques to the peanut-farming operations, and he added shelling and warehouse services for other farmers. Carter managed the family interests, including the Carter Warehouses which grossed an estimated $800,000 a year by early 1971, and owned some 2,500 acres of farmland in Sumter and Webster

counties. Carter had become a considerably successful peanut farmer and businessman (Moritz, 1972, p. 83).

Carter's civic involvement in his hometown, region, and state has been both extensive and diverse. From 1955 to 1962 he served as chair of the Sumter County Board of Education. He was member and later chair of the Americus and Sumter County Hospital Authority from 1956-1970. He was also a member of the Sumter County Library Board in 1961. In 1963 Carter became president of the Plains Development Corporation and the Sumter Redevelopment Corporation. In 1964 he helped organize and became the first chair of the West Central Georgia Planning and Development Commission. In 1968, Carter was president of the Georgia Planning Association and of the Georgia Crop Improvement Association in 1968-9. He has also been a state chair of the March of Dimes charity and a district governor of Lions International.

Carter's father had served in Georgia's state legislature as a representative and was serving as such at the time of his death in 1953. Carter himself made his first bid for elective office in 1962 when he became a candidate for the Georgia State Senate. Carter contested the original returns of that election, charging foul play at the ballot box. With help from attorney Charles H. Kirbo of Atlanta, Carter convinced the State Democratic Committee that fraud had indeed been committed and his name

went forward as the Democratic nominee in the general election. Carter was victorious in that election and reelected two years later. His service in the Georgia State Senate from 1963-1966 earned him a reputation for diligent attention to legislative detail, for initiative in formulating education legislation, for maintaining a moderately liberal voting record, and for being designated as one of its most effective members by a poll (Moritz, 1978, p. 101).

Although still relatively unknown, Carter decided to become a candidate in the Democratic gubernatorial primary in 1966 and he came in an impressive third in the six-man campaign. The Democratic candidate Lester Maddox, a staunch segregationist, faced Republican state representative Howard M. Callaway for the governorship. Liberals who opposed Maddox chose former governor Ellis Arnall as their write-in candidate which split the vote so that none of the three received a majority vote in the November election. The result was that the State General Assembly elected Maddox on January 10, 1967. After his defeat in the 1966 Democratic primary race, Carter returned home to his business and civic activities. At the same time he made serious preparations for the 1970 gubernatorial campaign.

During the four years between elections, 1966-1970, Carter delivered some 1,800 speeches throughout the state,

building an effective political organization and gaining wide publicity, particularly at the grass-roots level. For the second gubernatorial campaign in 1970 Carter assembled his team. Key members included: (1) a political science student at the University of Georgia named Hamilton Jordan who had served as the 1966 campaign's youth coordinator, then became campaign manager for 1970; (2) treasurer Robert Lipshutz, an Atlanta attorney and leader in the city's Jewish community; (3) media consultant Gerald Rafshoon, owner of an Atlanta advertising agency; and (4) Jody Powell, who had just completed graduate work in political science at Emory University. These key men had served on the 1966 team and would return for the successful 1970 campaign; they stayed on Carter's staff through all subsequent campaigns (Moritz, 1978, p. 101).

Carter as Farmer

Jimmy Carter's occupation as a farmer added a significant dimension to his identity. As a working farmer he was able to appropriate many of the historical, aesthetic, and cultural appeals of agrarian America. Echoes of populist doctrine could be included in his campaign, but most important were the Jeffersonian agrarian virtues of innocence, honesty, and plain talk that could be affirmed against the backdrop of an overwhelmingly urbanized, bureaucratized, and Nixon/Watergate-corrupted America.

In his New Republic June 26, 1976 article "Jimmy Carter: Agrarian Rebel? The Southern Paradox," Robert Coles affirmed the agrarian virtues of Carter's first biography, Why Not the Best: "Jimmy Carter's personal memoir contains an unashamedly sentimental and kindly look backward at an earlier, harder, but simpler and more traditional world" (1976, p. 16). According to Coles, Carter's world, particularly rural, southern Georgia, was populated by "devout, God-fearing, hard-working men and women" (1976, p. 17). Many of Carter's ancestors were farmers and his father's primary business was farming. In 1953 Carter himself resigned from the Navy to take over the Carter farms after his father's death. Unlike most politicians who seemed to be rootless opportunists, Carter had stayed on his land.

In his political career, Carter extolled an agrarian style and ethic. For example, for the 1970 gubernatorial primary campaign "Carter adopted a populist, down-to-earth approach, promoting himself as a 'simple country boy' in contrast to the aloof and sophisticated manner of his principal opponent, Carl E. Sanders, a liberal, who had served as Governor of Georgia from 1963 to 1967" (Moritz, 1972, p. 84).

Carter's down-home style was indicated by going to the people at the grass-roots level. Because former Governor Sanders had been endorsed by the state's political and

business leaders and supported by most of Georgia's large newspapers as the definite favorite, he did little to meet Carter's back to basics, rural challenge. From 1966 until 1970 Carter had crossed the state giving some 1,800 speeches. Carter benefitted from the prevailing "anti-establishment" and "anti-politician" sentiments among the electorate - a situation that would serve him well again in his 1976 Presidential campaign. Carter's face-to-face, voter-by-voter approach was in tune with the anti-institutional mood of the state electorate, just as his personalized recitals of agrarian virtue would later strike a chord in a national electorate disillusioned by Watergate and Vietnam.

This image of a Georgia peanut-farmer and the agrarian populist appeal would remain a central part of Carter's projected identity before the American public as candidate and President. Moreover, this appeal would remain a vital part of his public discourse as he would strive for identification with the American people and marshall support for his policies and programs.

Carter as Governor

Carter's experience as governor was decisive in the formation of his presidential style. His triumph was presaged by a religious experience and his administration was energized by an atmosphere of novel outsiderness. The

presidency as a moral calling and an ethic of populist renewal became Carter's special political style notes.

Carter and others have reported that this loss in the 1966 Democratic gubernatorial primary was a pivotal experience for him. Following his unsuccessful first bid for the office of governor, Carter reported a powerful religious experience. As Carter recounted in his first biography in 1975 Why Not the Best: "In early 1967 I had a profound religious experience that changed my life dramatically, and I recognized for the first time that I lacked something very precious - a complete commitment to Christ, a presence of the Holy Spirit in my life in a more profound and personal way, and since then I've had an inner peace and an inner conviction and assurance that transformed my life for the better" (Moritz, 1978, p. 101).

Moreover, it would seem that Carter's political ambitions were somehow further motivated by this religious conviction. After his defeat in the 1966 primary race, Carter returned to his business and civic activities, but at the same time made serious preparations for the 1970 gubernatorial campaign.

For the 1970 Democratic primary campaign Carter adopted a populist, down-to-earth approach. He promoted himself as a 'simple country boy' and tried to appeal to popular sentiments in the conservative rural areas and among urban blue-collar workers by criticizing the practice

of busing public school pupils to obtain a racial balance and by supporting private schools. Carter's campaign tactics were viewed as opportunistic by some observers and as evidence of his shrewdness by others. Carter secured a plurality among the nine Democratic candidates in the primary with 48.6% of the vote. Moreover, Carter then won the general election with 59.3% of the vote over Republican opponent Hal Suit. Carter had sought the support of not only the state's established white political bosses, but also black leaders of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Even though President Nixon had campaigned for Hal Suit, Carter's victory was clearly decisive (Moritz, 1972, p. 84).

Because his conservative stands had blurred his reputation as a moderate liberal, Carter emerged from the election as an enigma. His inaugural adddress on January 12, 1971 with its declaration, "I say to you quite frankly that the time for racial discrimination is over," earned Carter national attention, a Time magazine cover story, and a place among progressive politicians from "the New South."

Carter had become what James Wooten has called the "existential politician," one committed to an endless cycle of holding one office while preparing to run for another one. The governorship was merely a way station to the Presidency.

Carter would use his experience as governor of Georgia to demonstrate his administrative ability as he campaigned for the Presidency. Carter's claim that he made "government work" in Georgia was offered as evidence that he could do the same for the nation. His claims about reducing waste and taming the bureaucracy at the State House were offered as demonstrations of his ability to perform the same actions in the White House.

Carter as Southerner

Southern identity is a product of birth, nurture, and conscious choice. Born and raised on a farm in rural, southwestern Georgia, near the small towns of Plains and Archery, Jimmy Carter's education, both formal and informal, would remain overwhelmingly within a Southern context. After graduating from the small public high school in Plains, he spent two years at Georgia colleges-one year at Georgia Southwestern College in Americus, and then, one year at the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta. He would then go to the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. For only a half-dozen years while in the Navy, Carter left the South, including his only Northern excursion to New York from 1951 to 1953 when serving with the nuclear submarine program. He would return to Plains in 1953 and remain in the South until he would go to the White House in 1976.

It could be argued that Carter remained most comfortable with persons of similar cultural backgrounds, that is, other Southerners. Carter biographer Betty Glad has reported of his time at Annapolis: "As with other midshipmen, Carter's friendships were often based on geography - he tended to mainly 'run with Southerners'" (Glad, 1980, p. 52). Carter's staff and key advisers on the campaign trail and in office were mostly Southern: Charles H. Kirbo, longtime friend and Georgia attorney; media expert from Atlanta, Gerald Rafshoon; Jody Powell, graduate of Emory University; Hamilton Jordan, University of Georgia graduate; and Robert Lipshutz, an Atlanta attorney.

Carter's Southern identity served his "outsider" strategy - he was neither from the Northeast nor from one of the big city political machines. Throughout his political career and particularly in the 1976 campaign, Carter sought to distance himself from the political establishment. An example of this frequently used appeal was the Carter television commercial "Bandwagon," which aired in New York shortly after the Illinois primary. The television commercial carried the following message: "A recent Gallup Poll shows that only one Democrat can beat Gerald Ford for the Presidency. It isn't one of the Washington insiders and it isn't the Democrat who tied on with the political bosses and king-makers. The only

Democrat who can beat Gerald Ford is Jimmy Carter" (Glad, 1980, p. 259).

Of course, Southern identity had potential liability, because traditionally most of the nation has regarded the South and Southerners as less sophisticated, less educated, and more racist than the other regions of the country. As a "Southerner" Carter would become an easy target for political cartoonists, reporters, and journalists. But Carter established himself as a different kind of Southerner. Carter's ability to establish or enhance his credibility and identification with voters by describing himself in a number of ways illustrated his political skill. Because Southerners did not typically enjoy intellectual prestige in other regions of the country, particularly from the powerful Northeast sector, Carter could bolster his intellectual image by presenting himself as a nuclear engineer and physicist and therefore, balance out his other images as Southerner and peanut farmer. Carter's first appearance on the cover of a national news magazine, Time May 31, 1971, shows that he was successful in communicating this difference. The Time cover headline "Dixie Whistles a Different Tune" with a drawing of Carter's face upon the background - a juxtaposition of both the Confederate and American flags - with the subtitle "Georgia Governor Jimmy Carter" suggested that Carter represented both continuity and change.

Although journalists cast Carter as a politician of the "New South" and as a progressive, his values more characteristically matched those of the traditional South, especially those of the rural Southerner. Columnist George F. Will noted: "Carter is an unmistakably conservative person. The values he obviously cherishes and repeatedly invokes - piety, family, community, continuity, industriousness, discipline - are the soul of conservatism . . . Because Carter's political persona is a blend of liberal measures and conservative values, he is a baffling foe for Republicans" (Will, 1976, p. 33).

Presenting himself as both "traditional" and "progressive," Carter was able to reach out to disparate sections of the electorate. To Northern liberals and minorities he was that fascinating commodity, the converted or reformed Southerner ready to join the Union at last. For Southern whites, he was one of their own taking on the mantle of power at last.

Carter as "Born-again" Christian

Jimmy Carter's public declarations identifying himself as a "born-again Christian," a Sunday School teacher, and as an active member of the Southern Baptist Convention, brought widespread media attention to his candidacy. Moreover, religion became one of the primary topics of the 1976 campaign.

Traditionally, Presidents and presidential candidates have been members of the "mainstream" Protestant denominations such as Episcopalian or Presbyterian. Moreover, most have only been nominally involved and marginally identified by their religious affiliation. The model of the Presidency most people hold would be that of a President affiliated with a high-church tradition. In Georgia, the overwhelming religious tradition is Protestant with Baptists forming the leading denomination. Carter's religious affiliation, and even his religious practice, would be a cultural norm in Georgia.

While Carter's personal faith and public practice would be considered part of the cultural landscape in parts of the South and West, outside of that milieu such religious expression would be considered quite exotic. Peter Meyer raised the question that must have been on the mind of many a voter in 1976 - "Was Jimmy Carter - Sunday School teacher, hymn-singing, Bible-quoting, twice-born evangelical Christian - a preacher or a politician?" (Meyer, 1978, p. 57). Moreover, Meyer observed that: "Jimmy Carter and his evangelical ways were oddities-unknown to the national press, the eastern establishment, and a good many Americans living outside the South" (Meyer, 1978, p. 58).

As Dan F. Hahn has observed: "The most obvious characteristic of Jimmy Carter, revealed in his rhetoric as

well as in other ways, was that he was a deeply religious person" (1984, p. 280). During interviews and in his public discourse, Carter would identify himself through his religious belief and practice, and often approach political issues through his own spiritual viewpoint. Hahn, moreover, has argued that Carter's religion became part of his campaign strategy: "During the campaign [1976] Carter's religion was used to suggest to the people that Carter's godliness could help him be a good president, that because of the God-Carter relationship the Carter-people relationship would be close" (1984, p. 281).

Carter's close identification with religion became an important component of his ethos. He seemed to be Cato's "good man speaking well." As Keith V. Erickson has observed: "Carter's religious-political discourse reaffirmed our civic piety and faith in America: his religious discourses communicated trustworthiness, served as a source of identification with evangelicals, and generated media attention" (1980, p. 222). By designating himself as a "born-again Christian," Carter would appeal to the growing segment of evangelical voters who were then forming the religious-political coalition that would become known as the "New Religious Right." Even though the expression "born-again" - Christian - is clearly redundant, it signifies a "special type" of Christian - not only

conservative and evangelical, but spirit-filled, often but not always fundamentalist.

In Why Not the Best, Carter offered the following explanation of the role of religion in his life: "My religion is as natural to me as breathing. I'm a father and I'm a Christian. I'm a businessman and I'm a Christian. I'm a farmer and I'm a Christian. I'm a politician and I'm a Christian. The most important thing in my life beyond all else is Jesus Christ" (p. 59).

Carter's description of the priority and role of faith in his daily life and work is consistent with the context of his religious training within the Southern Baptist denomination. Southern Baptist historian H. Leon McBeth reported that Southern Baptists are the largest Protestant denomination in the United States with 14,730,000 members in more than 37,000 local congregations throughout the nation in 1987 (1988, p. 17). McBeth characterized Southern Baptists as "teaching 'rigorous morality'; offering a 'gospel invitation' at the end of most sermons; offering 'Sunday School' or religious education for children, youth, and adults; and associating in autonomous local congregations who decide their own financial and ecclesiastical affairs" (p. 21).

Southern Baptist theologian L. Russ Bush had identified several distinctive, unifying doctrinal beliefs of his denomination. Southern Baptists have often called

themselves "People of the Book." The Bible, according to 'The Baptist Faith and Message Statement,' adopted in 1963, is "divinely inspired and is the record of God's revelation of Himself to man" (1988, p. 24). Even though there is a measure of diversity within the denomination, Bush maintained that "in general, Baptists historically have been a free, evangelistic people, holding to divine sovereignty, trinitarianism, the deity of Christ, election resulting in regeneration, the necessity of visible repentance and faith, salvation that begins and perseveres by grace alone, believer's baptism by immersion, a symbolic Lord's Supper, a gathered church, and a congregational polity" (p. 25).

Southern Baptist salvationist theology with its emphasis upon religious "experience" as necessary for conversion explains the designation "born again." While many voters might have had confidence in Carter as a "born again" candidate, others were concerned about such a candidate's ability to properly administer the executive branch of the government for a pluralistic nation. James Wolcott described Carter as "single-minded" early in the 1976 campaign, and according to Dan F. Hahn, "that perception of him as a driven man, coupled with his born-again religious emphasis, suggested to many that he might be some kind of fanatic" (1984, p. 282). Moreover, George F. Will said of Carter during the summer of the 1976

campaign: "he burns with an unfamiliar religiosity" (1976, p. 33). Carter's expressions of faith must have seemed quite unfamiliar to the press, to the political establishment in Washington, D.C. and to many voters, but he was elected in 1976 over Republican incumbent Gerald Ford. Since credibility was a major factor in that campaign, one powerful contribution to the bolstering of Carter's image as a "believable, credible candidate" just might have been his and the media's focus upon his personal faith and "born again" religion.

Summary

This chapter offered a biographical sketch of Jimmy Carter with particular attention given to the development of his political-religious vision. The biographical categories included family, education, and career. Four additional dimensions were also provided of Carter as farmer, governor, southerner, and born-again Christian. The next chapter will offer a literature review for the study.

CHAPTER THREE

Review of the Literature

Introduction

This topic of study calls for a review of literature in three areas: (1) American civil religion, (2) Presidential rhetoric, and (3) Jimmy Carter's political communication.

American civil religion

"American civil religion" is the term that sociologist Robert N. Bellah has applied to the long standing tradition of civil-religious discourse in American public life in his first essay on the subject "Civil Religion in America."

> While some have argued that Christianity is the rational faith, and others that church and synagogue celebrate only the generalized religion of 'The American Way of Life,' a few have realized that there actually exists alongside of and rather clearly differentiated from the churches an elaborate and well-insitutionalized civil religion in America. (1967, p. 1).

Antecedent forms of Bellah's concept of American civil religion are found in Will Herberg's work Protestant, Catholic, Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology (1955). According to Herberg three central components define the "American Way of Life." This triadic identity includes: (1) belief in God; (2) belief in religion; and (3) belief in the three-faith system, the Judeo-Christian culture that supports the plurality of belief as long as it

falls under the category of "Protestant," "Catholic," or "Jew." Moreover, Herberg identified an overarching faith in this American Way of life that gives unity to so diverse a nation.

Bellah enriched the concept of civil religion with three later works. The first was the article "American Civil Religion in the 1970s" from the Anglican Theological Review (1973). In that article Bellah remarked upon the widespread acceptance and use of the phrase "civil religion in America" from its appearance in essays, books, symposia, and the New York Times and other newspapers. The second work, The Broken Covenant: American Civil Religion in Time of Trial (1975), grew out of Bellah's ideas presented at the Weil Lectures at Hebrew Union College in late 1971. This work is particularly relevant for rhetorical scholarship. In it Bellah described the ways in which religious symbolism and religious ideas have shaped the debates about our national origins and history. Bellah's latest work, Habits of the Heart, Individualism and Commitment in American Life (1985), was a sociological study of contemporary American life. The focus of the study included the identity, character, and mores of the American people. These beliefs function like topoi, the consensual building blocks of communal discourse. Bellah addressed the present cultural traditions and practices

related to citizenship, religion, and the "National Society" in this latest work.

Richard John Neuhaus has offered an additional perspective upon the intersection of religion and politics in American public life. In his 1984 work, The Naked Public Square, Religion and Democracy in America, Neuhaus questioned the practice and validity of political doctrine and conduct "that would exclude religion and religiously grounded values from the conduct of public business" (p. vii). Neuhaus has offered explanations for "religious politics" and "political religion" related to the decline of mainline Protestantism as a primary culture-shaping force and the increase of other religious groups--evangelical, fundamentalist, and Catholic--to take the place of mainline Protestantism and provide values and moral legitimacy for democracy in America. The metaphorical concept behind his central idea is that the "public square" will not and cannot remain naked. Moreover, Neuhaus has argued that: "If it is not clothed with the 'meanings' borne by religion, new 'meanings' will be imposed by virtue of the ambitions of the Modern State" (1984, p. vii).

Presidential Rhetoric

The Presidency in American life is much more than just the Chief Executive office. The President has become the spokesperson to and for the American people in both

domestic and international concerns. Michael Novak has argued that the American president becomes "a prophet, a priest, and a king" largely through the expectations and aspirations of the American public. In his book Choosing Our King: Powerful Symbols in Presidential Politics (1976) Novak assessed the role of the president within the context of civil-religious values. From his work as speechwriter for Democratic presidential candidate Sargent Shriver in 1970 and then working for Edmund Muskie and later, George McGovern in 1972, Novak gathered his insights for this work.

Theodore Windt's Essays in Presidential Rhetoric (1983) and Presidential Rhetoric (1961 to the Present) (1983), have described the President as becoming a symbol of our national aspirations, our national mood, and our national prestige. Much of the influence and power of an American president, according to Windt, takes the form of persuasion, or rhetorical power.

Robert E. Denton, Jr. has described the nature of the Presidency from a symbolic-interactionist perspective in his book The Symbolic Dimensions of the American Presidency, Description and Analysis (1982). According to Denton, each President creates, alters, or reinforces public and individual expectations of the office through discourse, use of symbols, rituals, and his or her own sense of history.

Traditionally the study of presidential rhetoric has focused largely upon a president's public discourse, major speeches. Kathleen H. Jamieson's Packaging the Presidency (1984) has offered an enlarged view of the understanding and study of presidential rhetoric. Jamieson has argued that modern media campaigning has greatly affected presidential political practices with the advent and meteoric rise of mass-media, political campaigns now include a great deal of television advertising time to complement the traditional public addresses and speeches, print-media, and the televised campaign debates since 1960.

Of central importance to this study is Roderick P. Hart's The Political Pulpit (1977). Hart has described the nature of American civil religion through the metaphor of a legal contract. Moreover, Hart has described the relationship between the American public and its politicians in terms of a rhetorical contract. A "balance" must be maintained between government and religion according to Hart's construct. The most significant feature of Hart's work is his rhetorical approach to civil religion. Hart's focus is on the enactment, reaffirmation, and recycling of our civil/religious understanding through political discourse. Thus Hart's political orator becomes an active figure in changing our perception about the role of religion in polity, in renegotiating boundaries between

sacred and secular, and in using religious concepts to accomplish secular objectives.

Jimmy Carter's Political Communication

Carter's writings are valuable not only in providing insight into his ideology, values, and world-view, but also because of the frequent references that he made to his own writings and ideas therein during his campaign and during his one term in office.

In 1975 Broadman Press, a Southern Baptist publishing house, produced Carter's first autobiography Why Not the Best? Carter traced his own movement from his rural background in Plains, his Annapolis training and subsequent Navy career as a submarine officer in Admiral Rickover's nuclear program, his return to his family's agricultural businesses in Plains, and then his rise to the position of governor of Georgia. Moreover, Carter described the progress of his political career from school board to Georgia State Senate to Governor to Presidential candidate. William V. Shannon offered the following in his review of the work for The New York Times Book Review:

> [This book] is a skillful, simply-written blend of personal history, social description and political philosophy that makes fascinating reading . . . . What this book makes clear is that Carter comes out of an older, more traditional, rural society that metropolitan America has almost forgotten. He has old-fashioned values . . . . Critics, friendly as well as unfriendly, worry whether Jimmy Carter believes in anything larger than his own success. This book does not provide conclusive answers. As in his campaign speeches, what comes across most clearly is his sensitive feeling for black people and for the South,

> the commonality of his and their hard, church-centered, rural life. His concern for the mentally retarded and for other handicapped persons, as well as his commitment to the environmental values of unspoiled land and clean air and water also come through as genuine. (Shannon, 1976, p. 4).

Carter's A Government as Good as Its People (1977) was a compilation of his public pronouncements beginning with his inaugural address as Governor of Georgia in 1971 to his inaugural address as President in 1977. A total of nine speeches are reprinted in their entirety along with excerpts from fifty-three more speeches and interviews. Themes within the book included openness in government, racial justice, promotion of human rights, the improvement of education, a strong defense, and the control of nuclear weapons. But the title indicated Carter's central theme that government can be "as good as its people." Historian Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. responded to that idea in his review of this book for The New York Times Book Review. Of Carter and this idea Schlesinger said:

> Since Mr. Carter has assured us that he would never tell a lie, one must conclude he really believes the American people to be good, honest, compassionate, etc., and filled with love. To such spacious generalizations, the historian can only respond that, on the record, some Americans are, and some aren't. . . . One curious feature of the Carter mind, as displayed in this book as well as in his auto-biography, is the apparent absence of a historical dimension. (1977, p. 1)

After editing over five thousand pages of notes taken during his one-term Presidency, Carter published his second autobiography entitled Keeping Faith: Memories of a

President (1982). It emphasized five main subjects: (1) improving relations with China; (2) enacting energy legislation; (3) negotiating the second Strategic Arms Limitation treaty (SALT II); (4) concluding the Panama Canal treaties; and (5) convincing Menachem Begin and Anwar Sadat to reach agreement at Camp David. Almost half of the book was devoted to the Iranian hostage crisis and the negotiations at Camp David between Begin and Sadat. Between the descriptions of the major events of his presidency, Carter reminisced over the joy of his inauguration in 1977 and the pain of his rejection in 1980 with his failed bid for re-election. Much of Keeping Faith offers background information and detail into the Carter Presidency and its greatest challenges and beyond the retelling of those events emerges a strong call for justification of that presidency and its efforts, decisions, and accomplishments.

Summary

This chapter offered a review of literature in the areas of American civil religion, Presidential rhetoric, and Carter's political communication. The next chapter will focus upon the methodology for the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter deals with the method of analysis. As the author's method is an adaptation of generic criticism, the chapter will begin with the work of forerunners, Edwin Black (1965) and Lloyd Bitzer (1965), and continue with the major practitioners, Karlyn Campbell and Kathleen Jamieson (1970). This discussion will include a review of the salient features of generic criticism and culminate in a synopsis of the work of Rod Hart. Finally, the chapter will describe a mode of analysis arising out of and extending Hart's work: a litmus test of civil-religious discourse.

Forerunners

The roots of generic criticism are to be found in Edwin Black's suggestive concept of "frames of discourse" (1965). Edwin Black's Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method advanced the notion that discourse can be understood in terms of collections of rhetorical discourses that share similar strategies (motives), situations, and effects. Black argued that discourse could be understood in terms of generic frame of reference. Constellations of discourse, then, might be identified and evaluated through formal

analysis. This proto-generic criticism was a foreshadowing of his brilliant student's work (Black, 1965, pp. 132-135).

In 1965 Black identified 'situation' as one of the elements in a generic frame of reference. Generic criticism is predicated on the belief that certain situations give rise to audience expectations that can be met only by certain patterns of rhetorical acts. Later in 1968, Lloyd Bitzer argued that rhetoric was a response to a particular kind of situation, one that invited resolution of an exigency. Further anticipating the concept of genre, Bitzer defined a rhetorical situation with the following words:

> a complex of persons, events, objects, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence which can be completely or partially removed if discourse, introduced into the situation, can so constrain human decision or action as to bring about the significant modification of the exigence. (1968, p. 8)

The exigence is something in the situation that calls for immediate attention or action, it is marked by urgency, and as Bitzer has theorized, the exigence calls for a "fitting response." Discourse, then, can be understood as a specific response to a particular situation.

Practitioners and Salient Features

Kathleen Hall Jamieson, Edwin Black's advisee, and Karlyn Kohrs Campbell established a definition of genre: "a classification based on the fusion and interrelation of elements in such a way that a unique kind of rhetorical act is created" (Campbell & Jamieson, 1978, p. 3). Jackson

Harrell and Wil A. Linkugel, Kansas colleagues of Karlyn Campbell, have described this internal dynamic as an 'organizing principle.' Harrell and Linkugel argued that the nature of rhetorical genre is based upon the observation that "rhetorical genres stem from organizing principles found in recurring situations that generate discourse characterized by a family of common factors" (Campbell & Jamieson, 1978, p. 3).

A body of discourse can be understood as a genre not only because it may contain certain recognizable forms, but because these elements are fused together by an internal dynamic, an organizing principle. Genres, then, are more than collections of elements displaying similarity, they are collections of elements that work together to form a dynamic, indivisible whole. This internal dynamic fuses together the stylistic, substantive, and situational characteristics of discourse. The elements of style, substance or content, and situation are understood more fully under the notion of genre based on the argument 'to know form is to know content.' Black, Campbell, Jamieson, and others have demonstrated the utility and explanatory power of generic criticism. Particularly beneficial is the emphasis on the substantive and stylistic requirements of a rhetorical situation.

The focus upon motive as described in terms of an internal dynamic or organizing principle will offer

understanding of the selection of rhetorical strategies employed by the rhetor. Contemporary rhetorical criticism has shifted from the traditional "speaker-audience" orientation toward a broader perspective of the interplay between rhetor, discourse, exigence, and situation.

Examples of some of the classifications of rhetorical genre would include: eulogy; political apology; expositional sermon; letters of resignation; post-game statements from an athlete or coach; campaign speeches; and a Presidential State of the Union address. Each of these types of discourse is composed of recognizable forms, combined in an interrelated manner, and bound together by an internal dynamic related to the motive of the rhetor, all of which produce a unique type of rhetorical form, a fitting response to an exigence in the larger situation. Examples of recent studies in generic criticism include: Ware and Linkugel's "They Spoke in Defense of Themselves, On the Generic Criticism of Apologia;" Martin's "A Generic Exploration: Staged Withdrawal, the Rhetoric of Resignation;" Ritter's "American Political Rhetoric and the Jeremiad Tradition: Presidential Nomination Acceptance Addresses, 1960-1976;" and Kruse's "Apologia in Team Sport" (Brock & Scott, 1980, pp. 396-420).

In her recent work, Rhetorical Theory and Practice (1989), Sonja K. Foss explored the epistemic dimension of generic criticism. She argued that the study of genres

enables critics to understand the construction of social reality through rhetorical discourse (p. 112). Thus, generic discourse reflects the cultural axiology, the conventional images, commonplaces and dominant style features of a community. Further, social reality is both enacted and recycled in generic discourse (p. 112).

According to Karlyn Khors Campbell in Critiques of Contemporary Rhetoric (1972) such carefully formed rhetorical discourse has five typical charcteristics (pp. 1-4).

(1) Rhetorical discourse is designed and created, understood as prose discourse which is 'planned and structured in such a consistent and coherent fashion as to justify and announce certain conclusions.'
(2) Rhetorical discourse is problem solving; the substance of rhetoric is not information, but the evaluation of information. It is concerned with the values that individuals and societies should adopt. Rhetoric, then, is advisory, for directly or indirectly it gives advice, takes a position, evaluates, and judges.
(3) Rhetorical discourse is public, addressed to others because it deals with circumstances and conditions that demand collective action.
(4) Rhetorical discourse is practical, it is characterized by its instrumentality, by its intent to produce alterations in attitude and actions.
(5) Rhetorical discourse is poetic--meaning the degree to which a discourse displays ritualistic, aesthetic, dramatic, and emotive qualities.

Moreover, Campbell argued that the general public expects rhetoric "to build to a climax, to heighten conflict, to leave us with a sense of closure, and to move us by speaking to our experiences and feelings (Campbell, 1972, p. 4). Further Campbell asserted that "the degree to which

a rhetorical discourse evinces poetic qualities will directly affect the size of the potential audience now, and in the future, and the nature and intensity of the response evoked" (Campbell, 1972, p. 4). Naturally a politician or a President would be concerned about such matters as size and stability of audience and the measure of their response.

The rhetorical analyst contributes to the process of analysis by imposing certain interpretive frameworks upon the study. For example, the author will draw upon his knowledge of the evangelical tradition, his detailed understanding of sermonic invention, and upon information gathered from a literature review on American civil religion and Presidential rhetoric to aid him in the interpretation of Carter's discourse.

In general, this study is consistent with the three stage critical protocol outlined in Karlyn Khors Campbell in Critiques of Contemporary Rhetoric (1972). In Campbell's three-stage process:

> (1) The critic locates the unique characteristics of a discourse or group of discourses.
> (2) The critic analyzes the internal workings of the discourse and its relation to its milieu.
> (3) The critic selects or creates a system of criticism to make evaluative judgments of its quality and effects. (p. 13).

Descriptive analysis, the first stage, is almost entirely intrinsic and organic--the focus is upon the discourse. Historical-contextual analysis is the second stage which

examines the extrinsic elements of discourse. The extrinsic elements include the external limitations, constraints, or influences on the rhetor's choice as Campbell has described it, or the "the rhetorical situation," as explained by Lloyd Bitzer, which emphasizes discourse as the interplay among exigences and environments. The second stage, then, emphasizes the goal-directed design or the function of rhetoric that seeks to produce specific results. The third stage is interpretive analysis. The critic either selects or creates a system of criticism and determines criteria for interpretation, evaluation, and the making of final judgments on the discourse. The critic bases such judgments upon the intrinsic descriptive analysis of the historical-cultural context (Campbell, 1972, p. 21).

In 1982, Jamieson and Campbell expanded their work on genre and introduced the notion of "rhetorical hybrids." They have defined genres as "dynamic fusions of substantive, stylistic, and situational elements and as constellations that are strategic responses to the demands of the situation and the purposes of the rhetor" (p. 146). Generic discourse, then, is the product of both the purposes of the rhetor and the demands/exigences of the situation. Aristotle identified three basic types of genres: forensic, epideictic, and deliberative (Aristotle, Rhetoric, pp. 3-4). A number of critics have noted that

these genres often overlap and combine in practical discourse. For example, Harold Zyskind identified the combination of both epideictic and deliberative elements in Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address" (Brock & Scott, 1980, pp. 202-212); and Michael Leff and Gerald Mohrmann have argued for a successful fusion of deliberative and of epideictic elements in Lincoln's address at Cooper Union (Brock & Scott, 1980, pp. 346-348).

Jamieson and Campbell have labeled these creative fusions and generic blends "rhetorical hybrids." The term "rhetorical hybrid" is "a metaphor intended to emphasize the productive but transitory character of these combinations" (Jamieson & Campbell, 1989, p. 147). Such hybrids may provide additional understanding of the coherence of complex rhetorical forms. Jamieson and Campbell have established two presuppositions related to rhetorical hybrids:

> (1) Such fusion is rule-governed, and
> (2) Identification of different generic elements and occasionally of whole genres within such acts allows the critic to understand how such acts work, and to predict their appearance. (1989, p. 147)

Thus, the critic can better understand the disparate strategies. Instead of viewing them as revolts against convention or personal aberrations, he or she might view them as part of the heritage of the rhetorical community.

Jamieson and Campbell have illustrated the concept of rhetorical hybrid through analysis of eulogies delivered by

members of Congress in honor of Robert F. Kennedy, and Lyndon Baines Johnson's 1963 Thanksgiving Day Address. A eulogy is a type of discourse that responds to human needs created by the death of a member of a community. As Jamieson and Campbell note:

> In Western culture, at least, a eulogy will acknowledge the death, transform the relationship between the living and the dead from present to past tense, ease the mourners' terror at confronting their own mortality, console them by arguing that the deceased lives on, and reknit the community. (1989, p. 147).

Even though the more obvious constraint in such an occasion would be the purpose of mourning the dead, which is clearly an epideictic genre; a deliberative genre might be selected as well because of the need to reknit the community. The circumstances and the strategies of the rhetor then, determine the nature of the rhetorical hybrid. As a result of their analyses of the Congressional eulogies for Robert F. Kennedy, Jamieson and Campbell concluded that:

> Because the eulogist is constrained by the need to memorialize the deceased and to reknit the community, she/he cannot propose policies inconsistent with those advocated by the deceased. Consequently, eulogists who supported the legislative initiatives of the deceased are likely to call for completion of those unfinished labors; conversely, eulogists who disapproved of his/her proposals will omit the deliberative subform. (1989, p. 148)

The eulogies for Robert Kennedy were consistent with these two principles. As they noted "colleagues who supported Kennedy's proposals while he lived are comfortable using

this occasion to call for their enactment as a memorial" (Jamieson & Campbell, 1989, p. 148). For example, Senator Javits said, "In all these causes [job training, food programs, and firearm controls] I will feel personally sustained and inspired--and so will millions of Americans--because they were causes that Robert Kennedy expressed with personal dedication" (Jamieson & Campbell, 1989, p. 148). Further it was noted that "colleagues ideologically opposed to Kennedy did not include a deliberative section in their eulogies, but instead memorialized his integrity and character" (p. 148). For example, Senator B. Everett Jordan said: "I did not always agree with Senator Kennedy's views. . . . But at the same time I respected him and admired many of his qualities" (Jamieson & Campbell, 1989, p. 148).

Jamieson and Campbell have identified two basic types of rhetorical hybrids--functional and dysfunctional. The functional rhetorical hybrid would be artistically satisfying and structurally operating as an organic whole--as in this case--"the eulogy incorporating deliberative appeals which are subordinate to the eulogy, whose motives do not appear self-serving, and whose advocacy will not divide the audience or community" (Jamieson & Campbell, 1989, p. 149). The genre of the eulogy is the predominant form while the deliberative appeals remain subordinate.

Jamieson and Campbell conclude about congressional eulogies that:

> (1) In eulogistic settings, one generic form predominates;
> (2) Fusions are not invariably successful;
> (3) Hybrids are called forth by complex situations and purposes and as such, are transitory and situation-bound. (1989, p. 154)

Of course, rhetorical hybrids that occur with some regularity may create formal expectancies on the part of some audiences. For example, Presidential inaugurals, hybrids whose fusions are sustained by recurrent situations, combine constant epideictic elements such as establishing unity after a divisive campaign, or appeals to traditional values, with deliberative elements such as outlining the philosophy of the new administration and setting its agenda.

One of the most ambitious and thorough scholars of generic criticism is Roderick P. Hart. Hart has taken Jamieson and Campbell's essentially literary categories and extended them to include a discourse tradition, American civil religion. While Hart's work on the Presidential Inaugural as a highly constrained oratorical form is impressive, the author has turned to Hart's earlier work, The Political Pulpit (1977), to develop a method of analysis that would reveal the nature and variety of symbolic breeches of the historic separation of Church and State. Categories of analysis which are implicit, but undeveloped in Hart's work will be defined and synthesized

as a method of rhetorical analysis suitable to the author's aims.

Rod Hart has defined American civil religion as the ritualized maintenance of the contract between religion and government. Accordingly, American civil-religious discourse is the public expression of the contractual enactment of this sacred/secular understanding. This balance between the state and an increasingly pluralistic religious heritage is constantly affirmed, re-enacted, and gradually re-negotiated through American civil-religious discourse. Given the honorific, yet separate, status of religion, it follows that Hart's American civil-religious discourse is conventionally abstract, banishing religious speech to a safe transcendence. However, the opportunity for a leader to violate the norms of the discourse is always present and potentially explosive. Thus, Hart's political rhetor becomes a potentially influential figure who might change our perception of the role of religion in polity, in negotiating boundaries between sacred and secular, and in using religious concepts to accomplish secular objectives.

Hart's "Rhetorical Contract" model is built upon three basic presuppositions:

(1) Religion is capable of providing an ultimate meaning system for its adherents.
(2) Government is able to exert coercive power upon the affairs of its citizens.
(3) Both government and religion wield considerable

> rhetorical power within their respective sectors and across sectors. (1977, p. 53)

Much of this rhetorical power for both government and religion exists in the form of public discourse. The existence of American civil religion in political discourse does not occur by mere accident or circumstance. Political rhetors routinely use civil-religious discourse for their mundane purposes. Hart expressed such strategic employment in the following:

> For as one looks at the amount and intensity of civil-religious discourse in America, one may be impressed by what seems to be the unerring rhetorical choreography exhibited by religious and governmental spokesmen alike. The timing, phrasing, and elegance of our national prayers appear to emanate from persons who know full well their roles in the rhetorical chorus line. Civic piety, in America at least, emerges not as much from blind, momentary passion, but from a knowing, practiced, thoroughly pragmatic understanding of the suasory arabesques demanded when God and country kick up their heels rhetorically. (1977, p. 45)

The practice of American civil religion is, then, a daunting task. Government practitioners know that they will be scrutinized during their civil-religious utterances.

Hart has identified five traits associated with contemporary American civil-religious discourse:

(1) It achieves its fullest expression during moments of crisis.
(2) It taps a dimension--religion--that is rhetorically compelling for many Americans.
(3) It reduces inordinately complex issues to their most basic, patently religious, understructures.
(4) It reaffirms the coordinated, but separate, roles men and God play in the affairs of this

nation.
(5) Its grand abstractness creates a totemic structure around which Americans may happily rally. (1977, p. 47)

Hart has described the nature of the negotiation between the political and religious arenas through the use of a legal metaphor--the rhetorical contract. This rhetorical contract has four constituent features:

(1) The guise of complete separation between Government and Religion will be maintained by both parties.
(2) The guise of existential equality between Government and Religion will be maintained by both parties, but Religion's realm will be solely that of the rhetorical.
(3) Government rhetoric will refrain from being overly religious and Religion's rhetoric will refrain from being overly political.
(4) Neither of the aforementioned parties shall, in any fashion whatsoever, make known to the general populace the exact terms of the contract. (1977, p. 44)

Mode of Analysis: A Litmus Test

In defining civil-religious discourse, Hart noted that violations of its conventions signalled a breach of the historic contract between Church and State. Hart has not fully developed these violations as a concrete order of discourse. He indicated that because of the pluralistic nature of American religion, the particular discourse features would vary from one religious message to another. However, the generic character of this discourse is clear. First, Hart has asserted that civil-religious discourse makes reference to the deity in a non-denominational mode. "The Great Judge," or "The Supreme Law-Giver" would be

acceptable, for example, while "Redeemer" would not be acceptable because of its specifically Christian, even evangelical, referent. Secondly, moral ideas must be abstract; they must not exhibit the religious, historic, or institutional features of a particular denominational context. Thirdly, civil-religious discourse must not contradict the American myth of the State as articulated in every presidential inaugural prayer: i.e., that America is a nation with a special destiny as a moral exemplar; that our executive is blessed; and that God will intervene in history on our behalf.

Presumably, then, a president or presidential candidate who violated the conventions of civil-religious discourse would be one who spoke in a way that suggested special recognition of a specific theology, whose references to God connoted a particular tradition, and who used rhetorical formats that violated the myth of the State e.g., a jeremiad that denied America's destiny or a prophetic structure that denigrated the nation's capacity for moral renewal.)

In summary, while Hart treats these violations on a purely generic level, his discussion of civil-religion leaves little doubt as to the identity of the essential violations. These violations are of at least three kinds:

(1) Nominal - Names of God that are not generic, but evoke a particular tribal or denominational

identity.

(2) Doctrinal - Ideas or images that are characteristic of a recognizable religious tradition.

(3) Structural - The use of established religious, strategic formats, such as the jeremiad. These formats have few or no rhetorical antecedents in political discourse and are not fully congruent with our civil-religious myth of America.

The use of these three textual benchmarks of civil-religious orthodoxy will be used to alert the critic to the presence or absence of violations. In addition, the critic will be able to note the nature, kind and frequency of the violations. Finally, the critic's association with contemporary American religion will aid him in locating the identity of the religious names, ideas, and strategies, and clues as to the identity of the audience(s) that are constructed by the religious choices embedded in the text.

On a processual level, the critic will proceed through three phases:

(1) What? What are the nominal, doctrinal and structural violations in the selected texts?

(2) How? How do the violations function within their linguistic and political contexts?

(3) Why? What are the consequences for Carter, for the nature and conventions of presidential

discourse and for American political communication in general?

Summary

This chapter has dealt with the theoretical background and general features of the critical methodology. A subsequent chapter (Evaluation) will illustrate its range and function.

CHAPTER FIVE

Selection of Discourse

Introduction and Rationale

This chapter will deal with the selection and justification of texts. First, it will explain the reasons for selection. Then it will detail the specific speeches to be analyzed and provide brief synopses of each.

There are four reasons for selection as follows:

(1) Speeches in which Carter reveals his conception of the role of the citizen in quasi-religious terms.

(2) Speeches in which Carter articulates his conception of America's historic mission in spiritual and moral terms.

(3) Speeches in which Carter justifies his specific programs in moral terms.

(4) Speeches that contain references to the moral dimension of government in general.

Thus the speeches chosen are either generic speeches in which Carter must speak broadly about the nature of government or speeches in which Carter must justify a particularly vital program. At such times a president must either define the nature of governance or reveal the moral compass of his specific actions. Thus I have chosen two kinds of speeches:

(1) Ceremonial Speeches

(2) Crisis Speeches

Based upon the criteria of the four reasons for selection and the two types of speeches, I have identified nine major speeches for this particular study. The following collection of discourse has met the requirements of both significance and representative nature based upon the following considerations. First, the collection is expansive, covering the time span of 1974 to 1979 -- the period in which Carter was both a candidate and a President. Second, these particular speeches represent discourse responding to situations of both domestic and foreign concerns and crises. Third, these addresses represent symbolically- important recurring contexts such as the Inaugural Address, State of the Union Address, and the "fireside chat." Such contexts often give rise to either ceremonial speeches or crisis speeches. Fourth, within these speeches Carter reveals his religious perspective: the role of the citizen in quasi-religious terms; America's historic mission in spiritual and moral terms; justification for specific programs in moral terms; and the moral dimension of government. Fifth, the number, significance, and diversity of these nine major addresses will provide both insight and information relative to the objectives of this study.

Nine major speeches

1. December 12, 1974, "For America's Third Century, Why Not the Best?" delivered before the National Press Club, Washington, D.C.
2. July 15, 1976, Acceptance Speech, Democratic National Convention, New York.
3. January 20, 1977, Inaugural Address, "The Ever-Expanding American Dream," Washington, D.C.
4. February 2, 1977, Fireside Chat, "Unity on U.S. Goals," delivered to the American people, the White House, Washington, D.C.
5. April 18, 1977, "The Moral Equivalent of War," delivered to the American people, the White House, Washington, D.C.
6. September 18, 1978, "The Possibility of Peace," Camp David Meeting on the Middle East, delivered before a Joint Session of the United States Congress, Washington, D.C.
7. January 23, 1979, State of the Union Address, delivered before a Joint Session of the United States Congress, Washington, D.C.
8. March 26, 1979, "Israeli-Egyptian Peace Treaty," delivered at the White House, Washington, D.C.
9. July 15, 1979, "The Erosion of Confidence," delivered to the Nation, the White House, Washington, D.C.

Background

(1) December 12, 1974, "For America's Third Century, Why Not Our Best?"

As Governor of the State of Georgia, Jimmy Carter delivered this address before the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. Within this speech, Carter sought to identify himself not only to the members of the press, but also to the Nation and to articulate his vision for America. Carter's introduction of himself with a litany of "identities" would later become commonplace in his presidential campaign discourse--"I am a farmer, an engineer, a businessman, a planner, a scientist, a governor, and a Christian."

Carter's vision for America was to return government to the people, for politicians to regain public trust by being trustworthy, and for "government to be as good as its people." Particular concerns included the federal bureaucracy, energy, tax inequities, poverty, health care, education, agriculture, national security, and the arms race. The title of the address and one of his appeals throughout is the phrase--"Why not the best?"--which was the challenge given to Carter during his service in the Navy by Admiral Hyman Rickover. That particular challenge would become not only a campaign appeal but also the title of Carter's first biography published in 1975.

(2) July 15, 1976, Acceptance Speech, Democratic National Convention, New York.

As Newsweek featured Carter that convention week in 1976: "He stood in the hot light of Madison Square Garden, a world away from his red-dust beginnings, and said mildly: "My name is Jimmy Carter and I'm running for President.' It was a measure of the distance he had run that he still needed some introducing to the 5,000 Democrats assembled in unnatural peace and uneasy unity at his feet" (Matthews, Lindsay, Harper, & Sciolino, 1976, p. 16).

Within this address, Carter accepted the nomination from the Democratic Party as their presidential candidate for the 1976 campaign against the Republican incumbent President Gerald Ford. Carter identified himself with John F. Kennedy and then other Democratic presidents--Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman, and Lyndon B. Johnson. Carter reviewed the recent history of the Vietnam War and Watergate in the context of advocating that "it is now a time for healing." He then articulated his vision for government, then his vision for America.

An additional strategy, often typical within a national political party acceptance speech especially if there has been party divisions, is to seek for reconciliation and a call to rally behind the party and the candidate. Carter proved no exception in this regard.

(3) January 20, 1977, Inaugural Address, "The Ever-Expanding American Dream."

After defeating Gerald Ford by a narrow margin in the 1976 Presidential election, Carter took his oath of office and delivered his inaugural address to the nation from its capital, Washington, D.C. The inauguration of our nation's President is clearly a ceremonial event resembling somewhat the crowning of a monarch.

Daniel J. Boorstin has described the importance of the Presidential inaugural as "our only American ritual." Of this event Boorstin has said:

> In the United States, where we have no hereditary sovereign, we are hard put to ritualize the majority voice. Our best effort is expressed in the inauguration. On this occasion, the President performs the only ritual required by the Constitution --to recite a 35-word oath, or affirmation: 'I do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the office of the president of the United States and will, to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States.' The inaugural address, following the traditional oath, charts a democratic crossroad between past and future. Since George Washington's first inaugural, the President beginning a new term announces his large hopes and intentions to enlist support of the whole citizenry. (Boorstin, 1989, p. 35)

Typically within the inaugural address a president articulates at least the following: his or her vision for the coming term of office and particular goals in terms of domestic policy and foreign affairs. Moreover, according to the research of Robert Bellah and Rod Hart, without exception presidential inaugurals have contained civil-religious appeals as well. Such appeals might come in the

following forms: specific acknowledgement of our "chosen nation" status; the seeking of God's guidance, favor, or blessing; the moral or spiritual role that America is to exercise in the world; instructions and inspiration for the citizenry. (Bellah, 1967, pp. 1-21; Hart, 1977, pp. 1-2).

Carter's inaugural was consistent with the typical format, yet he went beyond the standard "generic" civil-religious content of his predecessors in a number of significant instances. Within the inaugural, Carter spoke of the enduring "American dream," highlighting the values of faith, spirituality, competence, compassion, and moral strength.

In an attempt to demythologize the "imperial presidency," create a "common man" appeal, and to strengthen the message of their accessibility to the people, President and Mrs. Carter chose to walk to the inaugural site from the White House rather than take the customary limousine ride. Furthermore, Carter selected Aaron Copland's "Fanfare for the Common Man" as his inaugural music.

(4) February 2, 1977, Fireside Chat, "Unity on U.S. Goals"

Carter delivered this speech to the public from the White House. The "fireside chat" has become an important rhetorical vehicle for presidents to use as they strive to marshal public support for their decisions, policies, or

programs. Franklin Delano Roosevelt often rallied support from the American people through his national radio broadcasts from the White House. These broadcasts were largely informal in tone and they became known as "fireside chats."

This particular rhetorical form differs from the highly ritualized inaugural address and the codified State of the Union address which are both significantly formal speeches with large audiences present. The fireside chat has become a form wherein the president can send a personal message to the American people, particularly in times of crisis at home or abroad.

Carter took advantage of this particular vehicle, the fireside chat, early in his term, within two weeks of his inauguration. Within this speech, Carter outlined several of his key objectives related to his campaign promises. These objectives were: (1) development of a national energy policy; (2) restoration of the nation's economy; (3) reorganization of the federal government; (4) tax reform; (5) education; (6) welfare; and (7) foreign policy concerns.

(5) April 18, 1977, "President's Energy Policy--The Moral Equivalent of War."

Carter addressed the Nation over television and radio from the White House two days prior to his address to the Joint Session of Congress. Both speeches focused upon the

energy crisis and Carter's comprehensive national energy proposals.

In this address to the American people, Carter reviewed some of the history of the problems that have created and moreover, escalated the energy crisis. Then he outlined the ten fundamental principles upon which the national energy plan was based.

Furthermore, Carter listed seven specific energy program goals set for 1985. Carter concluded this speech with an admission of the potential unpopularity of the program and a call for sacrifice on the part of all.

(6) September 18, 1978, "The Possibility of Peace."

After two weeks of meetings at Camp David with President Anwar Sadat of Egypt and Prime Minister Menachem Begin of Israel, Carter delivered this address before a Joint Session of the United States Congress at the Capitol, Washington, D.C.

Peace in the Middle East was the goal of the Camp David meetings and negotiations. Carter had served as the host and mediator of these meetings between Anwar Sadat and Menachem Begin.

Within this particular address, Carter explained the four main issues that had divided Egypt and Israel and the subsequent Camp David agreements related to each issue. Carter not only informed the Congress of the Camp David accomplishments thus far, moreover he sought their support

for these two leaders, their countries, and their efforts toward a lasting peace in the Middle East.

(7) January 23, 1979, State of the Union Address

It is traditional for a President to deliver a "State of the Union" address within the first weeks of each calendar year in office. This address is usually delivered before the joint session of the United States Congress at the Capitol. Since the advent of radio and television, the American public has had the opportunity to participate in this event.

Typically, this address is largely an assessment of the "status quo" of the nation from the perspective of the President. Moreover, it is often accompanied by a progress report on particular programs or objectives. The State of the Union address might also be used as a forum by the President toward Congressional and public support.

In this address Carter dealt with a number of key issues including the following seven issues: (1) inflation; (2) unemployment; (3) rising health care costs; (4) the 1980 budget; (5) foreign policy; (6) SALT II; and (7) human rights, both at home and abroad. Carter's overall assessment was indicated by his statement--"there is every sign that the state of our Union is sound."

(8) March 26, 1979, "Israeli-Egyptian Peace Treaty."

Carter, President Anwar Sadat of Egypt, and Prime Minister Menachem Begin of Israel, delivered a series of

three speeches on March 26, 1979 at the White House. This historic occasion was the signing of the Israeli-Egyptian Peace Treaty which had resulted from the Camp David meetings hosted by President Carter.

Carter's speech recognized the significance of this historic moment; he reviewed some of the history of the Middle East related to war, and offered his personal tribute to both Sadat and Begin for their work toward peace between Egypt and Israel. Furthermore, Carter offered a challenge to the Arab world to work together for a permanent peace in the Middle East.

(9) July 15, 1979, "The Erosion of Confidence."

This particular speech is considered one of Carter's most controversial addresses; it has often been labeled "the malaise speech." It was delivered to the nation from Washington, D.C. on July 15, 1979.

Carter's approval ratings in the opinion polls had plunged to about 25% at this time (Gustainis, 1990, p. 3). From a rhetorical perspective, and certainly a political one, Carter needed to seize this opportunity to marshall public support and improve his credibility with both Washington and the public.

A significant factor in the context of this situation was that Carter had cancelled his previously announced July 5th energy speech and he somewhat mysteriously withdrew for

ten days to Camp David for consultation with government, business, religious, and community leaders.

In this speech, Carter characterized and summarized the statements that he had received at Camp David from the people as "Mr. President, we are confronted with a moral and spiritual crisis" (Carter, 1979, p. 643). Specific issues itemized by Carter as part of that crisis included: (1) energy; (2) lost confidence in the future by the American people; (3) lost faith in Government by the American people; (4) and special interest groups and Congress. Carter then identified his six-point energy plan.

Summary

This chapter dealt with the selection and justification of speech texts. The four criteria for selection were identified. The nine speeches selected were listed with a contextual background offered for each speech. The next chapter will be the analysis of these speeches.

CHAPTER SIX

Analysis of Discourse

Introduction

This chapter has two tasks: (1) To catalog the nominal, doctrinal, and structural violations of the civil-religious tradition in the nine speech texts; and (2) To evaluate the rhetorical function of those violations within the context ot the speech events and their implications for the Carter presidency and for presidential discourse in general.

Carter's rhetorical choices clearly indicate a unique and creative use of American civil religion. His usage is unconventional and he seems to be extending the boundaries that characterize the norms of civil-religious discourse.

Nominal Violations - Names of God that are not generic, but evoke a particular tribal or denominational identity. An example of a nominal violation would be a reference to God as "Redeemer" or "Creator."

Doctrinal Violations - Ideas or images that are characteristic of a recognizable religious tradition. An example of a doctrinal violation would be to identify oneself as "a Christian" or to address a political audience with the reference "brothers and sisters."

Structural Violations - The use of established religious, strategic formats, such as the jeremiad. The

use of Biblical texts in an expository manner would also be a structural violation.

NOMINAL VIOLATIONS

When he spoke before the National Press Club in Washington, D. C. on December 12, 1974 Carter was presenting himself and his vision for America. His self-introduction with a litany of "identities" would become commonplace in his presidential campaign discourse that would follow this first national address. Carter said of himself: "I am a farmer, an engineer, a businessman, a planner, a scientist, a governor, and a Christian" (Carter, December 12, 1974, p. 214.) Carter's identification of himself as "a Christian" clearly signaled a particular perspective toward God - the Christian God. The God named by Carter was not Will Herberg's conceptualization of the transcendent "Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish" God of a pluralistic nation, but rather an evangelical, Christian God; it certainly was not a god of the other religious traditions of the East.

Moreover, in this 1974 address Carter characterized God as the Creator God who is still active in the affairs of humankind, not the "Watchmaker" God who left the world to its own demise:

> We are still floundering and equivocating about protection of our environment. Neither designers of automobiles, mayors of cities, power companies, farmers, nor those of us who simply want to breathe

> the air, love beauty, and would like to fish or swim in pure water have the slightest idea in God's world what is coming out of Washington next. What does come next must be a firm commitment to pure air, clean water, and unspoiled land. (Carter, December 12, 1974, p. 215)

Carter's 'Christian' God was not only present and active, but the world was his possession - "in God's world". This reference is a clear indication of Carter's spiritual world-view, in sharp contrast to the secular world-view prevailing among most of the political establishment. Carter's characterization of God can be understood best through his particular religious tradition, Christianity. The doctrine of the incarnation wherein "God became flesh" and came to the earth in the form of Christ in order to reconcile the world is a fundamental doctrine within the Christian tradition. Within this tradition God "in Christ" is not only active in the world, in the affairs of persons, but also the ultimate sovereign ruler of this world. This concept of an incarnate God is quite different from a Muslim, Jewish, Hindu or other generalized concepts of God.

In his presidential inaugural address on January 20, 1977, Carter implicitly characterized God as a 'companion' God with the Old Testament Biblical quotation from the ancient prophet Micah (Micah 6:8):

> He has shown thee, O man, what is good;
> and what doth the Lord require of thee,
> but to do justly, and to love mercy,
> and to walk humbly with thy God.
> (Carter, January 20, 1977, p. 258)

The contextual framework for understanding the meaning of the quotation of Micah 6:8 includes the biblical account of Creation in Genesis chapters 1 - 3 wherein God walked with Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. From Genesis 3: 8-10, a text in the Pentateuch to which the prophet Micah in all probability would have had access, such an antecedent form of "walking with God" can be found:

> And when they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and when the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. Then the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, 'Where are you?' And he said, 'I heard the sound of Thee in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself.' (Genesis 3: 8-10, N.A.S.B., pp. 3-4)

From a literal interpretation, before the Fall people could walk with God and have direct access to the Divine. After the Fall, such a relationship or "walk" was available only through faith. For example, Abraham, the central patriarch of Christianity because of his faith, was described as a "friend of God." Thus "to walk" with God can be understood in either a literal sense or metaphorically. The concept of "walk" implied daily interaction, guidance, strength, and support from God.

The implication that one could "walk" with God indicated a "personal God" with the emphasis that evangelical Christians place upon a "personal relationship" with God in Christ through faith. Throughout his campaign and presidency, Carter would invoke the name and the image

of a personal God in reference to daily life, prayer, faith, character, morality, sustenance, and inspiration. Keith V. Erickson has reported of Carter that "God would help him formulate answers to national and international policy questions" (Erickson, 1980, p. 221). From an evangelical Christian perspective such faith in God goes beyond belief in a God to a relationship or "walk" with God. Even as a metaphor, the concept of "a walk with God" was quite powerful and one that persons from other religious traditions would find quite unacceptable. For example, such an anthropomorphic characterization of God would have been alien to persons of the Islamic tradition. Carter illustrated this idea of a walk with God in his withdrawal and search for meaning after his loss in his first attempt at the office of governor and in his meditations over his decision to make a run for the presidency.

Even in his most ecumenical moments, Carter's rhetoric resonated of American Protestantism. This message form and selection would have sounded eclectic to the secular press, but it would have been met with identification by his co-religionists. It is a truism that meaning is a function of context, and for large numbers of American Protestants, Carter's words had a special charge. Moreover, Carter's strategic employment of biblical references and quotations, along with his allegiance to the Christian faith, would

have so identified him with his own religious tradition that such rhetorical actions actually superseded his ecumenical attempts.

On September 18, 1978 Carter spoke to a joint session of the United States Congress at the Capitol informing the members of Congress about the negotiations of the Camp David Accords. He had just spent two weeks at Camp David with President Anwar Sadat of Egypt and Prime Minister Menachem Begin of Israel in order to secure peace in the Middle East. He closed the address to Congress with two biblical references. The first passage was part of Psalm 85, from the Old Testament, a document common to Judaism, Islam, and Christianity:

> Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee? I will hear what God the Lord will speak; for he will speak peace unto his people, and unto his saints; but let them not return again unto folly. (Psalm 85, Carter, September 18, 1978, p. 4)

It would appear that Carter had attempted to emphasize the similarities and common ground among the three nations, and the three religious traditions, assembled at Camp David. And he did the same again in Washington, D.C., particularly through the prefatory remark offered before the recitation of the part of Psalm 85: "The prayers at Camp David were the same as those of the shepherd King David" (Carter, September 18, 1978, p. 4).

Ironically and unfortunately, Carter may have jeopardized that acknowledgment of similarity when he

juxtaposed that previous sentiment and the Old Testament passage with the following statement:

> And I would like to say, as a Christian, to these two friends of mine, the words of Jesus, 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be the children of God'. (Carter, September 18, 1978, p. 4)

Not only did Carter clearly align himself with his own particular religious tradition by the statement - "And I would like to say, as a Christian . . . ," then he offered a quotation from the New Testament Gospel of Matthew (Matthew 5:9). The New Testament is a document that is not accepted by the three religious traditions present in this negotiation effort. From a rhetorical perspective, Carter's ecumenical beginning was clearly undermined by his partisan identification as a Christian and by his employment of a New Testament Biblical reference. Students of presidential rhetoric might profess to find some parallel in the international discourse of Woodrow Wilson regarding the League of Nations. Wilson's High Church rhetoric has an abstract patriarchal sound compared to Carter's very personal and religious discourse. Wilson's world-historical religious prose, for all its grandeur, had a spaciousness that prevented it from violating civil-religious norms. Then, too, Wilson spoke in a time not long removed from America's era of Protestant hegemony.

Almost a year and a half later, Carter, Sadat, and Begin met at the White House, on March 26, 1979 to commemorate the historic signing of the peace treaty, the

Camp David Accords. Each of the three national leaders spoke that day.

On this occasion Carter selected a reading from the Koran and then a passage from the Old Testament prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 2:4):

> In the Koran we read: 'But if the enemy inclines toward peace, do thou also incline toward peace. And trust in God, for He is the One that heareth and knoweth all things.' And the Prophet Isaiah said: 'Nations shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nations shall not lift sword against nation. Neither shall they learn war any more.' (Carter, March 26, 1979, p. 387)

It could be argued that Carter attempted to balance the use of the Koran with the subsequent passage from the Bible, the sacred text from his own tradition, Christianity.

Carter's concluding statements, however, appear to be more inclusive: "We pray God, we pray God together that these dreams will come true" (Carter, March 26, 1979, p. 387). Strangely, Carter followed that inclusive sentiment about prayers and dreams coming true with his own commentary - "I believe they will" (Carter, p. 387). Carter's declaration of "I believe they will" was not an expression of the power of positive thinking or secular optimism. From Carter's religious system the declaration of "I believe" would have meant potential or probable achievement, an affirmation of the will of God in this situation. Political language, it has been argued, is coded language. If so, "I believe" is a statement laden

with special meaning for evangelical constituents. Such declaration of belief is central to evangelical Christianity wherein God responds to that belief and intervenes in human history on behalf of those who believe. That simple phrase "I believe" would have had powerful meaning for persons from a similar religious background, particularly other evangelicals. Favor with God, in this tradition, is secured through faith and belief.

In his most controversial speech, often called the "Malaise speech," Carter addressed the nation on July 15, 1979. Carter had made energy policy central to his program and his earlier efforts had had little effect. He had presented four major speeches to the nation on energy and his administration had been working on energy policy legislation in Congress with little success since the very first part of his term in office. The circumstances and the content of this speech were quite controversial. To the surprise of the nation, the press, and most of his own staff, Carter had canceled what would have been his fifth energy speech. He offered no explanation and for ten days held an informal "domestic summit" with members of Congress and with business and religious leaders. Carter's pollster Patrick Caddell had attributed his drop in the opinion polls to a growing dissatisfaction and pessimism among the American public and called such a "crisis of confidence." Robert A. Strong has reported that during this period of

time "the president's positive performance rating in opinion polls had fallen to 25% - lower than those recorded for Richard Nixon at the depths of Watergate" and that "a poll taken by CBS and the New York Times within days of the tenth anniversary of Chappaquiddick found that 53% of those who identified themselves as Democrats preferred Edward Kennedy as the party's nominee in 1980. Only 13% preferred Jimmy Carter" (Strong, 1986, pp. 636-637). Carter's withdrawal to Camp David was much like a religious retreat, a search for understanding and meaning in this crisis of confidence. This retreat featured religious persons like Reverend Jesse Jackson and ordinary citizens who could bring testimony about the problems in their towns.

Strong's analysis of this event included the following commentary: "In a unique twist to modern political public relations, the president of the United States attracted national attention by not going on television" (Strong, 1986, p. 637). After the ten-day domestic summit at Camp David, Carter "gave a speech that was only partly about energy and is now remembered for its discussion of "malaise" - a word that does not appear in its text" (Strong, p. 637). While this speech seemingly focused upon energy problems and energy policy, Carter clearly indicated that the real problem was a "crisis of confidence" that he had 'heard' and understood from the American people, especially during his 'retreat' to Camp David. Violations

of civil-religious discourse are particularly prevalent throughout this speech. Three of these violations are of the nominal category.

As Carter spoke of his interpretation of the role as president in the introductory paragraph of this speech text, he offered an implicit "suffering servant" image: "I promised to you a President who is not isolated from the people, who feels your pain and shares your dreams and who draws his strength and his wisdom from you" (Carter, July 15, 1979, p. 642). It could be argued that a primary influence upon Carter's perception as a president "who feels your pain" was the concept and characterization of God as a "suffering servant" in Isaiah Chapter 53. The Old Testament prophet Isaiah described God, and prophetically God in the incarnate form of Christ, in the following manner: "Surely our griefs He bore, and our sorrows He carried" (Isaiah 53:4, N.A.S.B., 1977, p. 925). The pain of service is a stock image in the churches of the Southern evangelistic tradition. Thus, those who heard Carter's characterization of his role as a president "who feels your pain" associated him strongly with the suffering servant kind of God as depicted in Isaiah 53 as well as with the tradition of a conscious imitation of Christ. Such a humble and anthropomorphic depiction of God violated the standard 'all-powerful God of Providence' that leads, guides, and blesses the nation as presented by modern

presidents, if not all American presidents, except for Jimmy Carter. Not only would a 'suffering servant God' be unacceptable to practitioners of civil religion, such a God would be incongruous to followers of other major religions of the world. Once again the contrast with Woodrow Wilson's "God of Nations" is striking. Carter's folkishness may have grated a little on the general ear. It expressed solidarity, however, with the evangelical ear.

Within this "crisis of confidence" speech, Carter quoted some of the advice that he had received while at Camp David. From a religious leader Carter reported the following counsel: "No material shortage can touch the important things like God's love for us or our love for one another" (Carter, July 15, 1979, p. 643). Carter's selection of this particular message for his own speech was indicative of Carter's spiritual world-view and the corresponding priority of spiritual matters over material ones. Again, Carter presented God in an anthropomorphic manner - a God who loves. This type of characterization is quite different from the standard generalized, abstract God of the civil-religious tradition. He also violated the civil-religious tradition by presenting "God's love" as a separate entity from the material welfare of the nation. In contrast, the 'civil-religious' God guides and blesses the nation and his love and his bounty are seemingly synonymous. The Deistic tradition of God's guidance offers

a managerial, rational God who has a social contract with us as contrasted with the organic, familial God who loves us. The difference between a God who guides and a God who loves expressed two ideas of community - the rational individual contract as opposed to the tribal God, the Father of his people. Carter's spiritual world-view was not the secular enlightenment philosophy that sees happiness in material and scientific terms, nor God as a rational, gentleman-provider.

The last violation, found in the conclusion of Carter's malaise speech, has the appearance of a seemingly conventional reference to God. Carter said: "With God's help and for the sake of the nation, it is time for us to join hands in America" (Carter, July 15, 1979, p. 645). Yet the patently religious images that surround this reference to God included a call for "sacrifice" and a commitment to "rebirth." It could be argued that its placement within such an apocalyptic speech had a double meaning, especially with the echo of joining hands to Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech (1963) image of little children joining hands around the table of brotherhood as a new moral and spiritual vision of America.

It must be said that these nominal violations are a matter of the ear. They were not blatant violations that outraged the whole body of the American people. Rather they were ways of "naming" God that had special resonance

for a large Bible-learned constituency. Thus, while these names may have seemed only a little unconventional to secular or High Church or Jewish and Roman Catholic voters, they functioned differently for evangelicals. They said, "I am one of you." It was almost the equivalent of an early Christian tracing of a fish in the hand of another or in the dirt in second and third century Rome. Groups that had traditionally set their faces against the world now heard the voice of one of their own speaking from the very seat of secular power.

DOCTRINAL VIOLATIONS

Notwithstanding the speech occasion, whether ceremonial or crisis in nature, Carter typically employed words, phrases, images, and ideas that were characteristic of evangelical Christianity in general, and often expressive of Southern Baptist ideology and doctrine in particular. Many of the expressions are implicit, but the code would have been understood by religious listeners, especially evangelical ones.

For example, when Carter introduced himself to the nation via the National Press Club on December 12, 1974, he identified himself as "a Christian" (Carter, December 12, 1974, p. 214). For the working press, this may have sounded like a demographic designation. For voters of the Southern heartland, it was a sounding of the tocsin. The

natural integration of personal faith into daily life and conversation, typical for evangelicals and Baptists, was a given for Carter, considering his life-long religious background and involvement. Moreover this proclamation of oneself as a Christian or a 'born-again' believer is an example of the conviction, felt need, or duty to express or to witness to one's faith, characteristic of Carter's evangelical, Southern Baptist background and church involvement.

In contrast to such open talk about religion and personal faith is the tradition of the mainline Protestant separation of public life and personal piety. Columnist George F. Will later said of Carter and his religious confessions: "He burns with an unfamiliar religiosity" (Will, 1976, p. 33). Will compared Carter to mainstream Republican incumbent Gerald Ford during the summer of 1976: "It is possible that Carter is just the person to transform Ford's uninspiring but unquestionable normality from a liability to an asset" (Will, 1976, p. 33). As a journalist, Will was the inheritor of a long tradition of "tough mindedness." Thus Carter seemed either provincial or strategic in his use of language. His reaction to Carter was typical of the press.

Within the 1974 National Press Club speech, Carter identified a number of problems facing the nation. He said that:

> Our Nation has no understandable national purpose, no clearly defined goals, and no organizational mechanism to develop or achieve such purposes or goals. We move from one crisis to the next as if they were fads, even though the previous one hasn't been solved. (Carter, December 12, 1974, p. 215)

Carter then offered a Biblical quotation as an explanation for these conditions, without, however, offering any context or reference to the text Carter stated:

> The Bible says: 'If the trumpet gives an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle.' As a planner and a businessman, and a chief executive, I know from experience that uncertainty is also as devastating in private life and in government. (Carter, December 12, 1974, p. 215)

He went on to say, "There is no clear vision of what is to be accomplished" (Carter, p. 215). These statements about 'trumpets, battles, and vision,' probably did not translate for listeners who did not have prior familiarity with the Old Testament scriptures and stories of God's chosen people, the nation of Israel, as they conquered other peoples to establish their own sovereign land. But the devout would have often heard the familiar warning and rally cry - "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Proverbs 29:18) - from their local pulpits. Carter's images and explanations would have been not only accessible to them, but indeed powerful. This kind of 'vision talk' would have referenced a number of evangelical meanings such as setting a clearly defined 'godly' agenda for their own lives and congregations; or aligning themselves with God's plan; as well as preparing for Christ's 'Second Coming' to

the Earth and the subsequent millennium. It could be argued that such 'vision talk' would lend a kind of utopian or 'paradise lost' sense to political goals. Other politicians occasionally engage in this kind of talk. But Carter's constantly publicized commitment "framed" these remarks as the speech of an "insider." Voters heard him as their agent, and may have been more likely to fill in meaning for their spiritual lives. Thus, if Emerson's Puritan assumptions remained hidden when he spoke of transcendence, Carter's assumptions were revealed when he talked about morals.

Toward the close of the National Press Club speech Carter compared the present generation of Americans with the members of the First and Second Continental Congresses. His comparisons took the form of rhetorical questions, several imbedded with religious ideas. Carter said:

> I wondered to myself: Were they more competent, more intelligent or better educated than we? Were they more courageous? Did they have more compassion or love for their neighbors? Did they have deeper religious convictions? Were they more concerned about the future of their children than we? I think not. (Carter, December 12, 1974, p. 216)

An example of that religious code was Carter's question "Did they have more compassion or love for their neighbors?" (Carter, p. 216) which was a direct reference to the "first and second great commandments" from the teachings of Christ as recorded, the Gospel of Mark, Chapter 12, verses 28-31. "Love for neighbor," from a

Biblical perspective, was both manifestiation and demonstration of God's presence and love within a person's life. Carter's religious identification here is actually a rebuke of a contractual society where loyalty and worth are seen as matters of individual preference. Thus virtue replaces law, community replaces individualism, obligation replaces rights.

Carter's "Acceptance Speech" was given on July 15, 1976 in Madison Square Garden, New York City, the capital of secular Northern sophistication. Carter told the convention audience that "1976 will not be a year of politics as usual" (Carter, July 15, 1976. p. 642) and certainly it was not. He proposed that "Our people are seeking new voices, new ideas, and new leaders" (Carter, p. 642). Could that new voice be "a voice crying in the wilderness?" Such a voice would have invoked Biblical and messianic images of promise as recorded in Isaiah 40:3, Amos 5:18, and John 1:23 referring to Christ and his forerunner, John the Baptist.

Later in that acceptance speech, Carter expressed a religious conception of love. Carter reminded his convention and national audience via television and radio: "I have spoken many times about love, but love must be aggressively translated into simple justice" (Carter, July 15, 1976, p. 643). It could be argued that "love" is mostly foreign territory for politicians and political

discourse, but from Carter's rural, religious milieu - the arena of the pulpit - such talk seemed consistent with his 'Christian' ethos. One is reminded here of Cicero's famous aphorism in De Republica: "for these virtues (justice, civility, and respect) originate in our natural inclination to love our fellow man." Cicero further noted the connection of love to divinity, and such connections have been made by John Milton and John Witherspoon, but have been rare in America since Emerson. Carter's reference to love also evokes images of Martin Luther King, and also suggests that the traditional political virtues are rooted in religious morality with God as the repository of all good.

The long-standing religious tradition of concern for the poor, orphans, and widows was in sharp contrast to the secular materialism of the Nixon and Ford administrations who spoke of welfare as an investment. Carter transferred religious teaching to the arena of policy when he said:

> We should make our major investments in people, not in buildings and weapons. The poor, the weak, the aged, the afflicted must be treated with respect and compassion and with love. (Carter, July 15, 1976, p. 643)

Toward the close of his acceptance speech, Carter quoted part of a contemporary Bob Dylan song. At the time of the speech Dylan's reported born-again conversion experience had been much in the news and his lyrics were being freshly scrutinized for proto-Christian sentiments

and ideas. Citing the rock musician turned Christian, Carter said: "We have an America that, in Bob Dylan's phrase, is busy being born, not busy dying" (Carter, July 15, 1976, p. 644). After the nadir of Watergate, it seemed significant that the self-proclaimed, often media-reported "born-again" candidate Carter employed an image of America as 'busy being born' - resonating with evangelical, religious concepts of rebirth, renewal, and new birth- from a born-again rock musician.

The last signal to the devout and a clear violation of civil-religious discourse was the reference that Carter had insisted be a part of his acceptance address. As the July 26, 1976 Newsweek cover story "Coming on Strong" about Carter and Mondale reported:

> . . . Carter added in a new last paragraph urging his party to go forth 'as brothers and sisters' in unity and pride; the phrase, he told the group, was 'the most religious' in the whole evangelical text. (Newsweek, July 26, 1976, p. 23)

Carter's strategic employment of the phrase "as brothers and sisters" and his own reference to it as 'the most religious' phrase clearly supports the argument that Carter constructed messages for a religious, evangelical audience within his political discourse. It is also notable that Carter used the metaphoric frame of 'The March.' "To go forth . . . in unity and pride" was a favorite phrase of black civil rights preachers who convened their followers to pray together before going forth to take disciplined

political action. This evocation of 'The March' suggests that Carter, like the civil rights leaders of the 1960s, was ready to merge religious and political forms to attain civic goals.

On January 20, 1977 Carter delivered his presidential inaugural address. Hahn has reported some of the response to Carter's inaugural:

> James Reston referred to the Inaugural as a 'revival meeting.' Hedrick Smith said it was 'less rallying cry than sermon,' and Anthony Hillbrunner entitled his analyis of it, 'Born Again: Carter's Inaugural Sermon.' Certainly these commentators noted the most obvious subject in the speech. (Hahn, 1984, p. 268)

Carter began with a message of gratitude to Gerald Ford and then he framed the nature of the occasion in terms of universalistic moral principles and of spiritual renewal:

> For myself and for our Nation, I want to thank my predecessor for all he has done to heal our land. In this outward and physical ceremony, we attest once again to the inner and spiritual strength of our Nation. As my high school teacher, Miss Julie Coleman, used to say, 'We must adjust to changing times and still hold to unchanging principles.' (Carter, January 20, 1977, p. 258)

There are three isolations of civil-religious discourse within the first two paragraphs of this speech. First, according to Hahn, "when Carter thanked President Ford for 'all he has done to heal our land,' he implied that one of the Presidential responsibilities is healing" (Hahn, 1984, p. 268). Healing can be understood in medical terms and spiritual terms. As Hahn has explained "metaphorically, [healing] is a divine responsibility" (Hahn, p. 268).

Spiritual healing is clearly a priestly function. It is a far cry from Nixon's "lowering of our voices" or from the managerial terms in which Ford, Nixon, Eisenhower and even Johnson, Kennedy, and Truman defined the job. Second, when Carter spoke of this "outward and physical ceremony" of the inauguration in contrast to the "inner and spiritual strength of our Nation," he was indicating his dualistic, dichotomous religious world-view. Hahn has offered the following explanation for Carter's description of the moment: "In defining the world as two distinct parts, physical and spiritual, and then emphasizing the latter, President Carter set a religious mood for his inaugural address" (Hahn, p. 268). Third, not only did Carter emphasize the "spiritual strength" of the Nation, he also spoke of "unchanging principles." Even though he did not immediately identify those principles, he revealed their source in his next statements:

> Here before me is the Bible used in the inauguration of our first President, in 1789, and I have just taken the oath of office on the Bible my mother gave me just a few years ago, opened to a timeless admonition from the ancient prophet Micah: 'He hath shown thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.' (Micah 6:8) (Carter, January 20, 1977, p. 258)

Carter's references to God's transcendent authority clearly placed the state beneath that authority. Whereas Sartre once said "Man's project is to become God," Carter affirmed the limits of earthly aspirations in "walking humbly."

Evangelicals and Southern Baptists see themselves as "people of the Book." The Bible is their sole sacred text and the central reference point in their worship, liturgy, meditation, and religious instruction. Carter emphasized the importance of the Bible in his own life by taking the oath of office upon his own personal copy of the Bible and then making mention of that action in the speech that followed. As Hahn has noted, "Carter specifically referred to his faith by talking of the Two Bibles before him and by quoting the prophet Micah" (Hahn, 1984, p. 268). Carter affirmed his religious tradition and signaled his denominational background by this action and most significantly appeared to indicate a hierarchy of allegiances, an order in which the Bible was above the Constitution. Legitimacy was located in the will of God and not in satisfying the general will of the people.

Carter employed the word "spirit" seven times and used other clearly religious words such as "pray," "faith," "sacrifice," "religion," and "moral" an additional twenty-seven times in this short ceremonial, inaugural address. Carter used the specific phrase "a new spirit" four times in this speech. The phrase "a new spirit" could have held a number of meanings, but from Carter, a recently-elected 'born-again' Christian President, that "new spirit" phrase would not only have meant the new energy, ideals, and perspective of a new administration, but also "spirit" as

in spirituality. Spirit in this context exists as the contrasting term for "the flesh," or the material. For evangelical Christians, particularly those from the New Religious Right movement, a 'charismatic' meaning would have been quite probable. To them, Carter's reference to a "new spirit" would have indicated genuine conversion to Christianity authenticated by a charismatic or "new spirit" experience. Such talk of "new spirit" would have been commonplace for the pulpit and the revival meeting, but quite unusual for a presidential inaugural address. A probable Biblical context that would supply meaning for a "new spirit" would have been the Gospel of John, New Testament (John 3:1-8) and the conversation reported by John the Apostle between Christ and Nicodemus about faith and being born of the water and the spirit or being "born again." Probably not since William Jennings Bryan had a speaker mobilized this constituency, and indeed the Bryan of Chautauqua and the lecture circuit was closer to Carter's idiom than the populist Bryan of 1896.

As Carter sketched the history of our nation he said that: "Ours was the first society openly to define itself in terms of both spirituality and human liberty" (Carter, January 20, 1977, p. 258). His meaning behind the term "spirituality" is open to interpretation, but certainly an emphasis upon "religious" society, especially from his evangelical Christian perspective, would be a wholly

plausible understanding. Some colonial historians have described Americans as a people seeking freedom from established religion, and in some cases seeking freedom to establish their own religions. Although Protestant Christianity predominated, a consensus upon "spirituality" could not have been claimed then or since. Despite temporary Calvinist Establishment in New England, and Anglicanism in Virginia, no creed dominated, and the nation tolerated a diversity of religious and belief systems. Moreover, Carter's notion of "human liberty" has been decidedly slow in coming, more an ideal than a reality, especially for minorities throughout our history and at present.

Often a part of the inaugural address is the president's interpretation of his or her role. Carter as candidate provided an foreshadowing of Carter as president. It is likely that his grassroots, entering of every primary, dawn to dusk campaign characterized by his town meetings, reflected the desire and responsibility that he may have felt to connect with people beyond the Capitol. As a Southern Baptist he was part of a non-hierarchical congregationalist system wherein the pastor serves as the undershepherd to his flock and the congregation is the locus of power and decision-making. It could be argued that his Southern Baptist background, his campaign style,

and the following description from his inaugural give us indication of his interpretation of the presidency:

> You have given me a great responsibility - to stay close to you, to be worthy of you, and to exemplify what you are. Let us create together a new national spirit of unity and trust. Your strength can compensate for my weakness, and your wisdom can help to minimize my mistakes. (Carter, January 20, 1977, p. 258)

It could be argued that a significant influence upon Carter's perception of his role as president and his 'relationship' to the American people was his application of the Biblical "suffering servant" image of Isaiah 53. Such an interpretation of mutuality - "your strength can compensate for my weakness" and "your wisdom can help to minimize my mistakes" (Carter, p. 258) - "co-strugglers" in the same situation would have been typical of Carter's evangelical Southern Baptist background. Carter's notion of the presidency was certainly not an imperial one. Carter himself said: "There is no way to understand me and my political philosophy without understanding my faith" (Shaw, 1983, p. 16). James D. Speer has attributed primary influence upon Carter's perception and style of his presidency to his Baptist background. In his paper "Jimmy Carter was a Baptist President" (1990) Speer had concluded the following:

> (1) Certain features of Jimmy Carter's religious background provide an explanatory framework for understanding important aspects of his governing style.
> (2) There is a parallel between Baptist polity and Carter's perception of the structure and process of

> government.
> (3) There is also evidence that Baptist attitudes toward power and authority influenced Carter's embrace of presidential power. (Speer, 1990, p. 1)

A dominant feature of such a Baptist paradigm would have been the centrality of the congregation or "the people." With reference to authority, power, and decision-making, Baptists use a congregational style of governing, rather than a hierarchical structure. A local Baptist church would be analogous to a "town meeting" of the people of God, Carter's preferred method of communication with people as both candidate and president. According to Speer "Baptists have traditionally emphasized voluntarism and consensus, a fact which has implications for their view of power and their understanding of the structure and the process of government" (Speer, 1990, pp. 4-5). E. Y. Mullins, the prominent early twentieth-century Southern Baptist theologian, has described the rule of Baptist polity as "the consensus of the competent" (Mullins, 1908, pp. 55-56.) Such a belief might explain Carter's notion of "a government as good as its people." Speer has explained "the ideal pattern of decision-making among Baptists would be action between parties on the basis of primary moral agreement" because of their emphasis upon voluntarism and the idea of consensus (Speer, 1990, p. 6). Moreover, Speer has noted the following:

> Because of the resistence to the embrace of power, it follows that Baptists would resist bargaining and those aspects of presidential power that involve

> bargaining power. Since Jimmy Carter is a good Baptist, he would be expected to resist bargaining behavior and those aspects of presidential behavior that involve bargaining. (Speer, 1990. p. 19)

In Keeping Faith (1982) Carter described his relationship with Congress and that situation which requires bargaining and the exercise of presidential power as "my one-week honeymoon with Congress" (Carter, 1982, p. 65). Carter's discussion (1982) of this relationship includes the following observations:

> (1) I had several serious disagreements with Congress, but the issue of water projects was the one that caused the deepest breach between me and the Democratic leadership. (p. 78)
> (2) I made some mistakes in dealing with Congress, and one that I still regret is weakening and compromising that first year on some of these worthless dam projects. (p. 79)
> (3) Later, on the issue [water projects], I was not so timid. In October, 1978, I vetoed the annual public-works bill because it included some of the same water projects. (p. 79)
> (4) In this insidious game, (tax legislation for special interests) the number of votes available to the sponsors of a tax bill were almost exactly proportional to the number of loopholes added to the legislation. (p. 84)
> (5) In balance, my feelings toward Congress are mixed. On most issues, the lawmakers treated me well, sometimes under politically difficult circumstances. However, when the interests of powerful lobbyists were at stake, a majority of the members often yielded to a combination of political threats and the blandishments of heavy campaign contributions. (p. 88)

Carter's opposition to bargaining in his role as president can be seen during a news conference when he responded to a reporter's question of his willingness to exchange the water projects for the tax rebate package:

> I am not much of a trader. That is one of my political defects for which I have been criticized a

> great deal . . . I am not inclined at all to trade a water project that's not needed or my approval of it in return for a vote on a tax refund which I think is needed for every member of Congress and the people that look to that Congress member for leadership. (Speer, 1990, p. 20)

Speer has noted that it "might be that Carter's difficulty in working with Congress, and his apparent negative perception of the role of the professional Washington community, was simply - as Theodore H. White put it - that he didn't like politicians" (Speer, 1990, p. 24). Furthermore, "like a good Baptist preacher, Carter desired direct access to the people and basically disliked or distrusted the political 'hierarchy'" (Speer, 1990, p. 25). Therefore, similar to a Baptist pastor who was to be an "undershepherd" to his congregation, a "co-laborer," and a "servant" who worked alongside and "suffered" with his people, it could be argued that Carter's perspective on his role as president was directly and profoundly influenced by his Baptist faith, doctrine, and milieu.

In the next paragraph of his speech, the standard generic characterization of American civil religion became quite specific in terms of the behavior that Carter requested of his fellow citizens. He said: "Let us learn together and laugh together and work together and pray together, confident that in the end we will triumph together in the right" (Carter, January 20, 1977, p. 258). Personal and congregational prayers are standard ecclesiastical practices for Baptists; "praying together"

would have been a common experience from Carter's Baptist background and church involvement.

Considering that this speech was an inaugural address to a society bombarded by mediated messages of material gain, the pursuit of comfort and wealth, and that this was a ceremonial event, Carter's call for "less" not more and "sacrifice for the common good" were clear violations of American civil religion. Of prosperity and America's role in the world Carter said:

> We have learned that more is not necessarily better, that even our great Nation has its recognized limits, and that we can neither answer all questions nor solve all problems. We cannot afford to do everything, nor can we afford to lack boldness as we meet the future. So together, in a spirit of individual sacrifice for the common good, we must simply do our best. (Carter, January 20, 1977, p. 258)

Carter's inaugural is one of caution and limits, quite different from the expansive view of America in John F. Kennedy's inaugural address of 1961.

The strategy and nature of the "fireside chat" were consistent with the conceptualization of the presidency that Carter had offered in both his acceptance speech and his inaugural address. His stated purpose "to remain close to you" and his apparent dislike of the political hierarchy, coupled with his Baptist background and his desire for "community," found full expression in his first "fireside chat" energy speech. At the beginning of his first energy speech Carter told the nation on February 2, 1977:

> I've spent a lot of time deciding how I can be a good President. This talk, which the broadcast networks have agreed to bring to you, is one of several steps I will take to keep in close touch with the people of our country, and to let you know informally about our plans for the coming months. (Carter, February 2, 1977, p. 259)

Again Carter's emphasis upon the centrality of "the people," direct access to the people, and "congregational" participation in decisions that affect them were all consistent with Baptist heritage, doctrine, and practice.

Carter repeated the "call to sacrifice" which would become one of the cornerstones of his energy policy and energy discourse. He argued that: "Some of these efforts will also require dedication - perhaps even some sacrifice - from you" (Carter, February 2, 1977, p. 259). The call to sacrifice bacame a consistent refrain in Carter's discourse, particularly in response to the energy crisis. Individual sacrifice for the common good was not a virtue unique to Christianity, but the call to sacrifice is a significant distinguishing mark of the faithful in the Christian interpretation of the Biblical record and throughout ecclesiastical history. The central image of the cross and the absolute sacrifice of Christ for the redemption of the world is translated into the role of "sacrifice" for the believer as the follower of Christ. Since Christ is the ultimate role model, the imitation of Christ, "the way of the Cross," and sacrifice are standard evangelical beliefs. Genuine believers are those who are

willing to sacrifice themselves for God, the faith, and the community. From Carter's spiritual world-view, especially his evangelical Baptist Christian background, to ask Americans to sacrifice was a natural, reasonable, even noble request. A call to sacrifice would not have been so readily accepted by secular humanists. From a secular perspective, it is likely that sacrifice means exploitation and compromise, giving in and losing. Furthermore, since we elect public officials to run the government and take care of us, asking us to sacrifice seems quite out of order.

On April 18, 1977 Carter delivered his "Moral Equivalent of War" energy speech to the nation. The focus of the speech was the energy crisis and energy policy. The extraordinary feature of this speech was not its focus, but rather Carter's characterization of the domestic problem of energy as a "moral equivalent of war." It seemed an odd choice to a nation that had suffered division, recrimination, and defeat in their most recent war, Vietnam.

Carter had repeatedly warned the American public of the energy crisis, but they refused to accept the fact that such a crisis existed. The completion of the eight-hundred mile Alaskan pipeline in 1977 resulted in a surplus of oil on the Pacific coast. The former Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird claimed that the "crisis" was created by

the government and that the shortages were not real. Furthermore, Laird said that there was enough natural gas, oil, and coal to last "for several centuries." Moreover, Nobel prize recipient Milton Friedman had said that there was "no shortage of fuel and energy" (Armbruster, 1982, p. 383).

Carter's mere characterization of this effort as a "moral equivalent of war" translated the energy crisis from the pragmatic realm into another dimension - a moral or religious dimension. Carter said of the coining of this phrase and its application:

> When I declared the energy effort to be the moral equivalent of war - a phrase coined by William James and suggested to me by Admiral Hyman Rickover - it was impossible for me to imagine the bloody legislative battles we would have to win before the major campaign was over. Throughout my entire term, Congress and I struggled with energy legislation. Despite my frustration, there was never a moment when I did not consider the creation of a national energy policy equal in importance to any other goal we had. (Carter, 1982, p. 91)

Moral and religious concerns are often bound together in our culture because of Judeo-Christian influences. Thus, for Carter to attach a "moral" dimension to the energy situation could well have created confusion because such energy issues were not typically understood from a moral or religious perspective. It could be argued that Carter attached morality to the practical concern of energy because of hie spiritual world-view and his Baptist background with the Bible as the authoritative source of

moral and spiritual instruction. For example, the Biblical story of creation in Genesis, chapters 1-3, indicates that human beings are to have 'dominion' over the earth, to be its caretakers and stewards. That principle of responsible stewardship of the earth would have been part of Carter's Baptist heritage and teaching. Wastefulness of resources and abuse of the environment would have been clear violations of that 'Biblical' understanding of being a good steward of the earth.

This principle of 'Biblical' stewardship was clearly presented in this speech. Carter claimed that: "We must not be selfish or timid if we hope to have a decent world for our children and grandchildren" (Carter, April 18, 1977, p. 418). Furthermore he suggested that: "It (the energy crisis) is worse because more waste has occurred, and because more time has passed by without our planning for the future" (Carter, April 18, 1977, p. 418). He illustrated this idea of individual stewardship in the following statement:

> Each American uses the energy equivalent of 60 barrels of oil per person each year. Ours is the most wasteful nation on earth. We waste more energy than we import. With about the same standard of living, we use twice as much energy per person as do other countries like Germany, Japan, and Sweden. (Carter, April 18, 1977, p. 419)

Since the Enlightenment, the concept of progress has made Westerners uncomfortable with the idea of limits. This religious frame with its emphasis on a finitude, an end,

was peculiarly suited for this message, but its articulation was foreign to the progress tradition.

In addition to Carter's appeals of the stewardship of energy and its resources, he also called for sacrifice ten times in this one speech. Examples of Carter's calls for sacrifice include:

> (1) Some [energy proposals] will cause you to put up with inconveniences and to make sacrifices. (p. 418)
> (2) The first principle is that we can have an effective and comprehensive energy policy only if the Government takes responsibility for it and if the people understand the seriousness of the challenge and are willing to make sacrifices. (p. 419)
> (3) Our solutions must ask equal sacrifices from every region, every class of people, every interest group. (p. 419)
> (4) I can't tell you that these measures will be easy, nor will they be popular. But I think most of you realize that a policy which does not ask for changes or sacrifices would not be an effective policy. (p. 420)
> (5) I am sure each of you will find something you don't like about the specifics of our proposal. It will demand that we make sacrifices and changes in our lives. To some degree, the sacrifices will be painful - but so is any meaningful sacrifice. (p. 420)

Sacrifice would not have been a welcome message in that time of economic recession, increasing inflation and rising unemployment. To ask our nation's citizens, industries, and government employees to sacrifice would have been quite a political risk. Sacrifice would have held a different meaning for those who saw the world in spiritual terms like Carter. The separation they saw between "this earth" and the spiritual realm or "heaven" would have made sacrifice on this earth not only acceptable, but a noble, religious endeavor such as Carter had described - "any meaningful

sacrifice" (Carter, April 18, 1977, p. 420). Supporting Carter's viewpoint that sacrifice would be "meaningful" was the religious belief that sacrifice and suffering are redemptive. The ideas of suffering being redemptive could have been echoes from Martin Luther King, Jr.'s 1963 "I Have a Dream" speech.

It could be argued that Carter's labeling of the energy crisis and his Administration's approach to it as "the moral equivalent of war" created the sense that this situation was a moral decline, rather than just a decline of competence in terms of energy production, consumption, and management. Furthermore, his denunciation of wastefulness, his emphasis upon stewardship, and his repeated calls to sacrifice, all "reasonable" from his own spiritual world-view and Baptist background, were probably unusual, unpopular, and peculiar ideas to a largely secular, materialistic society.

After the historic negotiations held at Camp David in September 1978, Carter gave a speech about those peace talks to a joint session of the Congress on September 18, 1978. In this speech, Carter offered a tribute to President Sadat of Egypt and Prime Minister Begin of Israel, and then he spoke of the importance of peace in the Middle East. He also described the Camp David agreements and the framework for a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel.

Throughout this first Camp David speech, Carter violated the normal range of American civil religion in terms of the attention he gave to the matter and practice of prayer. To evangelicals in general and Baptists in particular, prayer is an essential feature of Christian doctrine and practice. Examples of Carter's references to prayer include (Carter, September 18, 1978):

> (1) The world prayed for the success of our efforts, and I am glad to announce to you that these prayers have been answered. (p. 2)
> (2) It is my strong hope, my prayer, that the question of Israeli settlements on Egyptian territory will not be the final obstacle to peace. (p. 4)
> (3) And for that [prospects for peace], I hope that you will share my prayer of thanks and my hope that the promise of this moment shall be fully realized. (p. 4)
> (4) The prayers at Camp David were the same as those of the shepherd King David, who prayed in the 85th Psalm, 'Wilt thou not revive us again: That thy people may rejoice in thee? I will hear what God the Lord will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and unto his saints: but let them not return again unto folly.' (p. 4)

Carter's frequent employment of the term "compassion" when he spoke about the nature and function of government in society revealed one of his operative beliefs about government that it should and can be "good", i.e., compassionate and moral because its people are good. Carter's frequent campaign slogan promising "a government as good as its people" seems to indicate that he believed that government could reflect the goodness, virtue, and compassion that he saw in people. Such a belief about people could have arisen from the Baptist notion that E. Y.

Mullins identified as "the consensus of the competent." That the nation is prior to the state is a spiritual idea of great antiquity. For example, the Biblical "chosen people" are in diaspora, but they are still a nation.

On January 23, 1979 Carter delivered his State of the Union address to the Nation from the House of Representatives during a joint session of Congress. In this speech Carter pointed out that:

> In our government it is a myth that we must choose between compassion and competence. Together, we build the foundation for a government that works - and that works for people. (Carter, January 23, 1979, p. 226).

This reference to compassionate government in the 1979 State of the Union address was not a unique employment. He characterized his expectation that government be compassionate in three previous speeches:

> (1) This country set a standard within the community of nations of courage, of compassion, integrity, and dedication to basic human rights and freedoms. [National Press Club Speech] (Carter, December 12, 1974, p. 214)
> (2) We (Democratic Party) have made mistakes and we have paid for them. But ours is a tradition of leadership and compassion and progress. [Acceptance Speech, Democratic National Convention] (Carter, July 15, 1976, p. 643)
> (3) Our government must at the same time be both competent and compassionate. [Inaugural address] (Carter, January 20, 1977,p. 258)
> (4) I have often used the phrase 'competent and compassionate' to describe what our government should be. [Fireside Chat] (Carter, February 2, 1977, p. 259)

Compassion is a term that implies "mercy, empathy, and pity." While compassion is not exclusively a religious or spiritual term, it could be argued that it would have had

such value when used by a 'religious' rhetor such as Carter. Religious or spiritual connotations could have been supplied by hearers who shared Carter's spiritual world-view and his particular religious background.

Carter's belief that government should be "good" and "compassionate" as well as "competent," and that it could be so because of the "goodness" of its people was certainly an optimistic perspective. Some would probably describe such a belief or notion as naive as well. Historian Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. has offered a response to Carter's belief in the 'good' nature of the American people and their government:

> Since Mr. Carter has assured us that he would never tell a lie, one must conclude he really believes the American people to be good, honest, compassionate, etc. and filled with love. To such specious generalizations, the historian can only respond that, on the record, some Americans are, and some aren't. One curious feature of the Carter mind is the apparent absence of a historical dimension. (Schlesinger, 1977, p. 1)

Schlesinger's commentary on Carter seems to demonstrate a lack of understanding by a secular historian who establishes "goodness" or "badness" upon 'the record,' a statistical catalog of specific instances instead of the religious notion of an elect. It is just as likely that Carter's ahistorical approach is a religious one. Within such an approach there is a quality of universal goodness in people. Such goodness is "tested" by circumstances but not made by them.

On March 26, 1979 Carter, Begin, and Sadat met for the signing of the Israeli-Egyptian Peace Treaty, the achievement of the Camp David summit in September of 1978. All three leaders represented nations that are largely characterized by three differnt religious and cultural traditions - Carter, the United States and Christianity; Begin, Israel and Judaism; and Sadat, Egypt and Islam. Of these three nations, certainly the United States is the most pluralistic nation with a wide and growing diversity of ethnic, cultural, and religious traditions. Will Herberg's characterization of the United States from the Judeo-Christian tradition in his 1955 book Protestant, Catholic, and Jew would have been significantly outdated for the United States in 1979, much less the present time. Nonetheless, the United States has still been considered to be a "Christian" nation with a variety of understandings of that identification. From such a spiritual world-view as Carter's, with his evangelical Baptist Christian background, it could be argued that on some level he, too, might have shared that perspective of the United States as a "Christian" nation. More importantly, America is still viewed by most of the world as an extension of Western European civilization, and its leadership is traditionally connected to Western or "Christian" values.

In what was both a ceremonial occasion and an ecumenical moment, Carter jeopardized that ecumenical

opportunity by quoting the prophet Isaiah, by offering the patently folk religious phrase "brothers and sisters," and his own understanding of prayer at the conclusion of the speech. Since both texts offer invitations to peace and not war, it would seem that the selection from The Koran quoted first by Carter would have been sufficient exposition. His use of the Biblical passage might have been seen as an attempt to 'balance' the use of The Koran or to supersede its value. While prayer and meditation are central practices in each of the three major religions represented at the treaty signing, Carter's characterization of prayer was clearly from his own tradition. As he declared, "We pray God, we pray God together, that these dreams will come true. I believe they will. Thank you very much" (Carter, March 26, 1979, p. 387). From an evangelical and Baptist perspective, the prerequisite for prayer to be answered or accomplished remains largely with 'the faith' of the one who prays. Carter spoke from his own religious tradition when he said "I believe they will," referring to the prayers surrounding the Israeli-Egyptian negotiations and peace treaty. From the two other religious traditions, "answers" to prayer are contingent upon other factors such as the disposition of God, the nature of the request, or "the will" of Jehovah or Allah, moreso than the condition of the one who prays or the quality of their faith. Americans are inheritors of a

two-thousand year old tradition. While our religious ideas are largely Judeo-Christian, our political ideas are Greco-Roman. There has always been tension between the "two swords" and each has had its own sphere. At Camp David, Carter seemed more like his theocratic partners in word and deed than like the agent of a nation with a firm separation between Church and State.

On July 4, 1979 Carter decided to cancel what would have been his fifth nationwide energy speech. He did not offer a clear explanation for this cancellation and his "retreat" to Camp David became an object of speculation among the press. Carter described the situation in the following way:

> I was aware that the public would be wondering what was going on at Camp David but was willing to accept some initial concern and criticism if I could dramatize the importance of the questions I was trying to answer - and also find some answers myself. (Carter, 1982, p. 115)

After his Camp David consultations Carter returned to Washington, D.C. and on July 15, 1979 he gave the revised energy speech. This speech was designed to recapture his sense of leadership, to deal with the nation's 'crisis of confidence' as understood and reported by Carter's pollster Patrick Caddell, and to outline his revised energy proposals.

In "The Erosion of Confidence" speech, or as it has been also entitled, the "Malaise speech," Carter quoted some of the comments or advice that he had been given at

Camp David. These comments came from "small groups of key advisers - governors, local officials, members of Congress, executives from business and labor, economists and energy experts, religious leaders, a small group of experienced political advisers, and some of the most senior and respected news reporters" (Carter, 1982, p. 116). Moreover, in his presidential autobiography, Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President (1982), Carter listed some of the comments that he had received at Camp David, and some of those were used as illustrations in the speech while some that were listed were not quoted directly. Several of these statements noted by Carter stretch American civil religion to the breaking point because of their particularly 'doctrinal' religious connotations. The following statements illustrate Carter's habitual mode of composition. His political judgments are expressed in religious images; his political metaphor blurs private moral conduct and public civic conduct; situational decisions are universalized with the language of transcendence.

His retreat recollections include several statements from persons that indicate clear and potent religious appeal. Two such examples illustrate this religious appeal. The first example is: "I want to say, 'I have one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one President, one policy!'"

(Carter, 1982, p. 119). This statement was clearly inspired by the Biblical passage found in Ephesians 4: 4-6:

> There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. (Ephesians 4:4-6, N.A.S.B., 1977, pp. 268-269)

The mixture of "policy" and the supposedly secular position of "president" with "one Lord, one faith, one baptism" was at best curious. Policy is contingent and subject to revision while the Spirit is sovereign and immutable. The statement is impossible to translate without the knowledge and understanding of the Biblical passage from which it is drawn. This violation of American civil religion is clearly evident in the weaving of Biblical text and political commentary, a mixing of religious ideas and expectations with expectations of government and the presidency.

The second example is that: "America is a nation with the soul of a church" (Carter, 1982, p. 119). This "church" metaphor was apparently one that had a powerful resonance for Carter. The local Baptist church had been a central element in his hometown of Plains, Georgia as a boy, and undoubtedly a powerfully influential force throughout his adult life as well. Not only is the "church" metaphor of the nation extremely idealistic, it is also overly simplistic. It emphasized the voluntaristic rather than the coercive, legal nation; as an extended

metaphor it exalts the belief of the people over technical and rational solutions, and it places Carter squarely in the pulpit as the preacher-teacher.

Standard American civil religion invokes the blessing of God which is often interpreted as material blessing. Within this "Malaise Speech" Carter attacked materialism and argued for spiritual values.

> In a nation that was proud of hard work, strong families, close-knit communities and our faith in God, too many of us now tend to worship self-indulgence and consumption. Human identity is no longer defined by what one does or by what one owns. But we've discovered that owning things and consuming things does not satisfy our longing for meaning. We have learned that piling up material goods cannot fill the emptiness of lives which have no confidence or purpose. (Carter, July 15, 1979, p. 643)

Carter's characterization of the nation as worshipping "self-indulgence and consumption" and the "piling up [of] material goods" that "cannot fill the emptiness of lives which have no confidence or purpose" could have been pulled out of many a Christian sermon. The St. Louis Post-Dispatch said that Carter's speech "mixed morality with energy, being in some respects a sermon and in others a call to action" (The New York Times, July 17, 1979, p. A13). Carter's denunciation has a distinguished pedigree. It is the voice of the prophets of Ancient Israel calling for repentance, of Christ cleansing the temple of the moneychangers, of Oliver Cromwell, of Savonarola, of Jonathan Edwards, and of George Whitefield.

Carter's spiritual world-view was evident when he argued that: "It's clear that the true problems of our nation are much deeper - deeper than gasoline lines or energy shortages. Deeper, even, than inflation or recession" (Carter, July 15, 1979, p. 642). He summarized the 'true' problems with the statement, "We are confronted with a moral and a spiritual crisis" (Carter, July 15, 1979, p. 643). While the energy issue must have been understood by most persons as a domestic, pragmatic, economic, production, and management problem, Carter attempted to make the energy issue a moral and spiritual concern. As Hahn has concluded: "The influence of that evangelical experience [for Carter] pervades-symbolically, structurally, and ideologically - the very foundations of the Energy speech" (Hahn, 1980, pp. 583-584).

STRUCTURAL VIOLATIONS

Structural violations of civil-religious discourse would include the use of established religious formats in political contexts. Principal among these are the jeremiad (or other sermonic elements such as first-person testimony), Biblical passages used as prooftexts, and calls to repentance and dedication. The term "jeremiad" was coined by historian Perry Miller to refer to the type of sermon characteristic of the Puritan preachers in late

seventeenth-century New England. Typically, it must include a threat of punishment if a "return" to God is not accomplished. According to Garry Wills, "the preachers denounced like an ancient prophet the people's defection from its contract with God, a defection that can free God from honoring his promises in the contract" (Wills, 1990, p. 69). If man kept the covenant, on the other hand, God was bound by virtue of a compact made between persons of the Holy Trinity. The jeremiad has come to describe discourse, religious or secular, which identifies Americans as a "chosen people" and calls them to return to traditional or "Christian" values and 'preaches' that salvation can be achieved by that return to God, rededication to those values, and hard work.

James D. Barber, in his article "Adult Identity and Presidential Style: The Rhetorical Emphasis," (1968), has explained how these religious formats and structures become a part of a President's discourse. Barber's remarks illustrate well the concept of the 'limitations' of personal political experience:

> The President is a person who tries to cope with an environment by using techniques he has found effective. For all the complexities of personality, there are always regularities, habitual ways of handling similar situations, just as the demands and opportunities of the Presidency are complex, but patterned. Thus, the President-as-person interacts with the set of recurrent problems and opportunities presented by the Presidency; the pattern of this interaction is his political style. He copes, adapts, leads, and responds not as some shapeless

> organism in a flood of novelties, but as a man with a memory in a system with a history. (Barber, 1968, pp. 938-939)

Certainly Jimmy Carter as a person, a political candidate, and as President, was a product of an environment that was not a particularly cosmopolitan one: his birth in the red-dirt clay of rural southwestern Georgia, and his childhood and early manhood in Plains with the Plains Baptist Church serving as a primary instrument in his religious, cultural, and ideological training. It seems that Carter's born-again Christianity is the characteristic that is most typical of his President-as-person insignia (Hahn, 1980, p. 583). Hahn made the connection explicit: "Carter's understanding of government and society emerged out of his experience as a born-again Christian" (Hahn, 1980, p. 584). The conflation of evangelical and secular political categories seems evident within Carter's discourse in the form of structural violations of the patently generic nature of American civil religion.

In Carter's December 12, 1974 speech to the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. he violated the typical American civil religious form. First, he offered an uncited Biblical passage as a prooftext for his explanation of the lack of effective management of the federal government. Rejecting the secular model of government guaranteeing security and material well-being, Carter

affirmed a teleological model of a political community with a transcendent purpose:

> Our Nation now has no understandable national purpose, no clearly defined goals, and no organizational mechanism to develop or achieve such purposes or goals. We move from one crisis to the next as if they were fads, even though the previous one hasn't been solved. The Bible says: 'If the trumpet gives an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle.'" (Carter, December 12, 1974, p. 215)

The juxtaposition of the Biblical passage indicates that it is meant to serve as a prooftext for his assessment of the Nation and its present government.

The second example from this National Press Club speech of a structural violation is Carter's use of "first-person testimony." A standard feature of evangelical Christian worship services and sermons is the "testimony" wherein the believer 'testifies' or offers a first-person account of their belief. A first-person testimony includes a "witness" to the experiential nature of faith - the telling of what a person has seen, heard, or experienced. From an evangelical perspective it is one's religious "experience" that validates or authenticates one's belief. Carter's use of this form would have seemed utterly conventional in a secular text. It's status as "testimony" is achieved by its proximity to the Biblical prooftext:

> As a planner and a businessman, and a chief executive, I know from experience that uncertainty is also a devastating affliction in private life and in government. (Carter, December 12, 1974, p. 215)

Subtle, yet powerful, was Carter's "witness" to his experience. His first-person testimony is expressed clearly in the phrase "I know from experience." Such a witness of "experience" reinforces belief; somewhat ironically, it puts faith in tangible form.

In his presidential inaugural address on January 20, 1977, Carter offered one of his favorite Biblical passages as a prooftext in support of the quotation from his high school teacher, Miss Julia Coleman. According to Carter:

> As my high school teacher, Miss Julia Coleman, used to say, 'We must adjust to changing times and still hold to unchanging principles.' (Carter, January 20, 1977, p. 258)

He followed the "unchanging principles" statement with this preface and the subsequent Biblical prooftext:

> Here before me is the Bible used in the inauguration of our first President, in 1789, and I have just taken the oath of office on the Bible my mother gave me just a few years ago, opened to a timeless admonition from the ancient prophet Micah: 'He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.' (Micah 6:8) (Carter, January 20, 1977, p. 258)

Carter does not allow the listener or reader to imagine his or her own principles, but he supplies the context of Protestant Christianity for them by placing the Biblical text of Micah 6:8 after the quotation on principles from his high school teacher.

In his Keeping Faith (1982), Carter described the process of thinking about and writing this inaugural speech. His style model was Woodrow Wilson, a president

noted for his deep religious faith and his strong penchant for using religious imagery:

> Over a period of several weeks I had done a great deal of work on these few words, and in the process had read the inaugural addresses of the Presidents who served before me. I was touched most of all by Woodrow Wilson's. Like him, I felt I was taking office at a time when Americans desired a return to first principles by their government. His call for national repentance also seemed appropriate, although I feared that a modern audience might not understand a similar call from me. (Carter, 1982, p. 19)

As he discusses the writing of his inaugural Carter illustrates perfectly Barber's explanation of rhetorical choices and forms as manifestations of a president's historical pattern of coping with the world:

> With Rosalynn I had discussed which of two Bible verses to cite. I had known them both since childhood, and they were an integral part of our religious beliefs. At first, I intended to use II Chronicles 7:14 ('If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land'), but after some second thoughts about how those who did not share my beliefs might misunderstand and react to the words "wicked" and "sin," I chose Micah 6:8. (Carter, 1982, p. 19)

Carter spoke of the familiarity of these Scriptures, "I had known them both since childhood," and he described them as "an integral part of our religious beliefs" (Carter, 1982, p. 19). It is likely that their familiarity and importance would have made these Scriptures and other Biblical texts quite accessible to Carter as choices of proof or illustration for his discourse. In addition, it is significant that Carter's choice in this specific instance

was not between secular and Biblical proof, but concerned which of the two Biblical texts to use. It seems apparent that Carter was aware of a "religious code" when he said that some "might misunderstand and react to the words 'wicked' and 'sin'" (Carter, 1982, p. 19).

Carter's selection of the phrase "moral equivalent of war" with his administration's approach to the energy crisis is a curious one. In his autobiography Carter attributed the suggestion of the phrase to his former superior naval officer Admiral Hyman Rickover. The phrase had been coined by William James (Carter, 1982, p. 91). Neither William James nor Admiral Hyman Rickover are associated with the kind of religiosity Carter exemplified. Carter's energy speeches contained a form of prophetic warning, or jeremiad, a patently religious form most fully realized in the Puritan Colonial sermon, complete with a standard "Christian" call to sacrifice for the common good.

On February 2, 1977 Carter delivered his "fireside chat" energy speech, just two weeks after his inauguration. Until he 'framed' the problem in jeremiadic form, Carter's appeal proceeded in the conventional political idiom:

> One of the most urgent projects is to develop a national energy policy. As I pointed out during the campaign, the United States is the only major industrial country without a comprehensive long-range energy policy. . . But the real problem - our failure to plan for the future or to take energy conservation seriously - started long before this winter and will take much longer to solve. I realize that many of you have not believed that we really have an energy problem. But this winter has made us

> all realize that we have to act. (Carter, February 2, 1977, pp. 259-260)

Carter prefaced this warning about energy with a call to personal sacrifice: "Some of these efforts will also required dedication - perhaps even some sacrifice - from you. I don't believe that any of us are afraid to learn that our national goals require cooperation and mutual effort" (Carter, February 2, 1977, p. 259). Carter placed the blame of the energy crisis upon our nation's lack of planning and energy conservation, and the lack of belief on the part of many people in the reality and seriousness of the energy crisis in the first place. Furthermore, Carter believed that: "We must face the fact that the energy shortage is permanent. There is no way we can solve it quickly" (Carter, February 2, 1977, p. 260). The solution according to Carter included his "call to sacrifice for the common good" and his appeal to "help ['love'] our neighbor," both commonplaces in Christian sermons:

> But if we all cooperate and make modest sacrifices, if we learn to live thriftily and remember the importance of helping our neighbors, then we can find ways to adjust, and to make our society more efficient and our lives more enjoyable and productive. (Carter, February 2, 1977, p. 260)

Had Carter stopped here with a few policy recommendations, the speech would have been unremarkable. Instead he began to 'account' for the situation in jeremiadic terms. A standard feature of the jeremiad is the breach of the contract between God and his people, with the outcome of

people 'losing faith' in one another. Carter used this feature of a jeremiad toward the conclusion of his fireside chat on energy:

> We have lost faith in joint efforts and mutual sacrifices. Because of the divisions in our country many of us cannot remember a time when we really felt united. (Carter, February 2, 1977, p. 262)

The retelling of history and the remembrance of times when a people were "faithful" is a standard feature of the jeremiad. The retelling is designed to persuade the hearers to a return to right living with God and fellow human beings. Carter used this formula in the following:

> But I remember another difficult time in our nation's history when we felt a different spirit. During World War II, we faced a terrible crisis - but the challenge of fighting against fascism drew us together. Those of us old enough to remember know that they were dark and frightening times, but many of our memories are of people ready to help each other for the common good. (Carter, February 2, 1977, p. 262)

Carter's concerted energy policy push came during the third week of April, 1977. During that particular week he delivered two major addresses on energy both characterizing this effort as "the moral equivalent of war." The first speech was presented to the nation from the White House on April 18, and the second speech, April 20, to a joint session of the United States Congress.

Carter's message form in the April 18 speech was more explicitly a warning in the jeremiad tradition. His prophetic warning and proclamation was clear from the very beginning of the speech:

> Tonight I want to have an unpleasant talk with you about a problem unprecedented in our history. With the exception of preventing war, this is the greatest challenge our country will face during our lifetimes. The energy crisis has not yet overwhelmed us, but it will if we do not act quickly. It is a problem we will not solve in the next few years, and it is likely to get progressively worse through the rest of this century. We must not be selfish or timid if we hope to have a decent world for our children and grandchildren. We simply must balance our demand for energy with our rapidly shrinking resources. By acting now we can control our future instead of letting the future control us. (Carter, April 18, 1977, p. 418)

The call to sacrifice was more strident in this speech than in the earlier "fireside chat" speech on energy of February 2, 1977. Carter envisioned his call as a time of testing for the American people: "Many of these proposals will be unpopular. Some will cause you to put up with inconveniences and to make sacrifices" (Carter, April 18, 1977, p. 418). Following his call to sacrifice, Carter reiterated his sermon-like warning: "The most important thing about these proposals is that the alternative may be a national catastrophe. Further delay can affect our strength and our power as a nation. Our decision about energy will test the character of the American people and the ability of the President and Congress to govern" (Carter, April 18, 1977, p. 418). Carter increased the scope of his prophetic warning with this later statement: "If we fail to act soon, we will face an economic, social, and political crisis that will threaten our free institutions" (Carter, April 18, 1977, p. 419).

Carter's most controversial speech, often called the "Malaise" speech, has been described by Hahn as "two speeches in one - a sermon on the American loss of confidence and a presentation of his 'new' energy policy" (Hahn, 1980, p. 583). The entire speech bristles with civil religious violations, because of its unashamed and undisguised sermonic form. According to Hahn, "The influence of that evangelical experience pervades symbolically, structurally, and ideologically - the very foundation of the Energy Sermon" (Hahn, 1980, pp. 583-584). Hahn further noted that the form of the speech parallels "the typical sequence of the born-again experience: identification of problem, retreat to meditation, decision to commit, announcement of rebirth" (Hahn, 1980, p. 584). Carter had followed this "retreat, decision, pronouncement" formula before. As presidential candidate when his campaign was losing momentum in the fall of 1976, he had employed the same journey of the soul:

> Carter convened his staff, along with outside advisors, for several days of self-analysis at an isolated retreat; afterward, it was publicly announced that Mr. Carter, having somehow strayed from his path that had led to his nomination, would retrace his steps. (Gold, 1979, p. E19)

And, as President when his Administration was experiencing difficulty in the Spring of 1978, Carter returned to the same spiritual success formula:

> [Carter] convened his staff, along with outside advisors, for several days of self-analysis at an isolated retreat; afterward, it was publicly

> announced that the President, having strayed from the path that led to his election, would regroup his Administration. (Gold, 1979, p. E19)

Carter's "retreat - decision - pronouncement" formula was a significant part of his religious heritage. From his Christian background there were numerous examples of leaders who demonstrated this approach to decision-making including: Moses retreated to Mt. Sinai and God gave him the stone tablets that contained the Ten Commandments; John the Baptist withdrew to the wilderness and he preached about sin and repentance to the multitudes that followed him there; and Christ took his disciples to the garden at Gethsemane in order to give them instructions prior to his arrest, trial, and crucifixion.

Even though this particular speech was purportedly Carter's fifth energy speech, its origin was curiously convoluted because of the circumstances of his retreat to Camp David for the ten days of consultation and meditation: While this speech constitutes almost a paradigm case of civil religious conflation, Carter routinely used a number of specific forms commonplace in sermons in his presidential speech. The jeremiad, or prophetic warning, undergirds the following statements from this speech (Carter, July 15, 1979):

> (1) So I want to speak to you tonight about a subject even more serious than energy or inflation. I want to talk with you right now about a fundamental threat to American democracy. (p. 643)
> (2) The threat is nearly invisible in ordinary ways. It is a crisis of confidence. It is a crisis that

> strikes at the very heart and soul and spirit of our national will. (p. 643)
> (3) We can see this crisis in the growing doubt about the meaning of our own lives and in the loss of a unity of purpose for our nation. (p. 643)
> (4) The erosion of confidence in the future is threatening to destroy the social and the political fabric of America. (p. 643)
> (5) Our people are losing that faith. Not only in Government itself, but in their ability as citizens to serve as the ultimate rulers and shapers of our democracy. (p. 643)
> (6) This is not a message of happiness or reassurance but it is the truth. And it is a warning. (p. 643)
> (7) We are at a turning point in our history. There are two paths to choose. One is the path I've warned against tonight - the path that leads to fragmentation and self-interest. Down that road lies a mistaken idea of freedom. (p. 644)
> (8) The energy crisis is real. It is worldwide. It is a clear and present danger to our nation. These are the facts and we simply must face them. (p. 644)

In these statements Carter sought to instruct the American people about the real crisis that he saw, one of a "crisis of confidence" - a crisis of faith on the part of the people in government and in themselves. He also wanted to instruct them in the reality and seriousness of the energy crisis and to gain support for this newly revised energy program.

Typically an evangelical Christian sermon closes with a call to commitment, salvation, or reaffirmation of faith. Carter concluded his energy sermon with the same type of call or appeal:

> Let us commit ourselves together to a rebirth of the American spirit. Working together with our common faith, we cannot fail. Thank you and good night. (Carter, July 15, 1979, p. 645)

Summary

The examination of the nine speech texts indicate a significantly greater number of doctrinal and structural violations in comparison to nominal. It is likely that Carter was sensitive to a reverential disposition toward God by honoring the ancient Hebrew tradition of not saying the name of Yahweh. When he did make reference to God it was most often indicative of a personalized God, of God as companion which is a Christian concept.

Carter's integration of personal faith into daily life and his life-long involvement as a Southern Baptist were evident in the doctrinal and structural violations. Of the three types of violations in this study, there was the greatest number in the doctrinal category. His religious sensibilities and spiritual world-view are evident in his statements that government be compassionate, his calls for sacrifice, and his frequent self-reference as a Christian.

His use of established religious formats were evident throughout the nine speeches. In addition to the frequent use of the jeremiad, calling the nation to return to God, morality, and spirituality, he frequently used Biblical references and passages as prooftexts. His use of first-person testimony resembled the "witness" which is often a part of evangelical worship. His emphasis upon experiential knowledge is consistent with the salvationist

theology and conversion experience orientation of his denomination, Southern Baptist.

Conclusion

This survey of nominal, doctrinal, and structural characteristics exhibited by these nine major addresses by Jimmy Carter as candidate and president appears to demonstrate a choice of rhetorical pattern that threatens the norms of civil-religious discourse. Carter's references to God, his policy appeals, and his message forms contain echoes of a root American Protestantism. Why did this rhetorical pattern go almost unremarked in the media at the time? The reasons are not far to seek.

It is likely that millions of Catholics, Jews, High Church Protestants, and secular voters (along with the cosmopolitan press) missed the nuances of the oral tradition in which Carter had been nurtured. Further, millions of voters did not understand the rhetorical assumptions underlying Carter's traditional Christianity. According to Keith D. Miller's Voice of Deliverance: The Language of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Its Sources (1992) these assumptions are: 1. All truth is derived from the Bible. 2. All truth is shared among all listeners. 3. This truth is "best communicated orally" and in narrative form. 4. This kind of communication diverges sharply from other knowledge systems (most notably Western philosophy and scientific method which pursue truth "by challenging

authority" and opposing in dialogue "every species of received wisdom" (Miller, 1992, p. 115).

Whereas non-Protestant auditors "heard" Carter's Biblical references as "supporting material," Protestants, particularly evangelicals, "heard" them deductively. For Protestant auditors they were the true Word of God as relevant for today's problems as for those in Biblical times, the core truths that undergirded and authorized all human actions. Contemporary problems were understood through applications of Biblical narratives. Furthermore, the narratives themselves were not to be treated as probable or provisional; they were not to be examined or questioned or to be used as fodder for the advancement of a political dialogue. These stories, quotations, anecdotes, examples, references, and illustrations were the truth. The religious orator engaged in "voice merging" (see Miller, 1992, pp. 142-158) and allowed him or her to weave together disparate texts and authorities, ancient, and contemporary events, in a way that celebrated a collective voice while it allowed a limited individual virtuosity.

At the very least, Carter's language appears to promise a style of governance in which religious values and goals are privileged over a largely secular and material agenda. What advantages did Carter's rhetorical choices have for secular and non-Protestant auditors who did not "hear" the echoes of Biblical archetypes or understand how

his language might undermine the Thomas Aquinas-like compromise between sacred and secular domain? These voters heard a kind of quaint religiosity that the media had taught them to expect from old-fashioned, rural, or "Southern" Americans. This quaintness contrasted favorably with the supposed slickness of the Nixon administration. Thus, Carter's language gave him a strong moral appeal in the midst of the disillusionment of Watergate and Vietnam. However, it mobilized constituencies and promised actions that ended in a shipwreck of disppointment. Carter did not embrace the fundamentalist agenda although his rhetoric invited them to join his constituency. His actions seldom addressed the moral crisis his rhetoric had delineated. Garry Wills offered the following explanation of Carter and this situation with the New Religious Right, in his Under God: Religion and American Politics (1990):

> Evangelical discontent with Carter's liberalism would prove in 1980 that he was never an authentic representative of their grievances. The political energies of the religious Right turned without a struggle from Carter to Reagan, disillusioned by Carter's flaccid approach to Communism, his disinterest in the "social issues," his "relativistic" internationalism. (Wills, 1990, p. 119)

Evangelicals felt betrayed by Carter and their votes were harvested by Ronald Reagan, who carried most of the South and West in 1980. In the 1980 election, Ronald Reagan received 51 percent to Jimmy Carter's 41 percent of the popular vote. Reagan also secured a landslide victory of

91 percent of the electoral college. Reagan received 489 electoral votes to Carter's 49. Moreover, the Republican Party made substantial gains in the House of Representatives and also won a majority of seats in the Senate.

Garry Wills has offered insight into the defection of religious voters from Carter to Reagan in 1980:

> People who observed the religious scene only casually were surprised that ardent believers would desert their studiously biblical fellow Baptist, Jimmy Carter, to vote for Reagan in 1980. The greater wonder, for those familiar with the religious priorities of the Right, was that Carter had ever won the evangelical vote. Jerry Falwell said he had been deceived by Carter. Evangelicals vented on Carter all the rage and disappointment of a supposed betrayal. They felt the secular menace had grown under his stewardship. (Wills, 1990, p. 120)

Reagan was far closer to the range of the Religious Right's concerns than Jimmy Carter had ever been. Even though Carter was a born-again Christian, he was a liberal in both his theology and his politics. He was not a fundamentalist when it came to matters such as evolution, abortion, school prayer, and the Communist threat. Ronald Reagan brought a reassuring message to these "chosen" people that "we're number one." Reagan conflated the language of the personalized God and the language of patriotism. Reagan had called evolution a scientific theory and he was therefore seen as pro-creationist, an important position for evangelicals, especially those who were Biblical literalists. He was also pro-life and an advocate of

school prayer. Carter did not criticize the Religious Right's particular targets - the American Civil Liberties Union, the federal courts, the National Education Association, and feminists. All of them had been attacked by Reagan who had gone so far as to promise to abolish the federal department of Education. For the Religious Right it was a clear decision: Reagan was pro-life and Carter was pro-choice.

When Carter lost the 1980 presidential election to Ronald Reagan he became the first elected incumbent President to be defeated for re-election since Herbert Hoover in 1932. Carter had received 51% of the popular vote in 1976, but only 41% in the 1980 election.

In 1976 Carter had used his religious convictions and identity to present himself as trustworthy and to use as a rhetorical strategy to strengthen his ethos. As a candidate, this employment of religious appeal to strengthen ethos worked well for Carter because he only had to speak of what he would do in office if elected. While in the White House, Carter faced test after test of those heightened expectations - expectations that he had helped create by his public discourse. Carter had set the stakes so high in terms of the expectations that he projected for himself as president: (1) honesty - "I will never lie to you;" (2) 'moral' productivity and efficiency - "a competent and compassionate government;" and (3) access-

ibility - "I will stay close to you," and so forth. Further, his outsider's stance evoked the prophet's traditional opposition that progressively weakened his relationship with Congress.

Additionally, while in office Carter weakened his own "presidential" image by admitting mistakes and limitations to the nation via his public discourse. Carter said to the American people: "Your strength can compensate for my weakness, and your wisdom can minimize my mistakes," as well as "I realize more than ever that as President I need your help." Here he sounded the style-note of the preacher, who is less a leader than the collective moral expression of this people. Not only did Carter set unobtainable expectations in his public discourse for himself as President and for his Administration, he also set unobtainable expectations for the American people.

Carter's rise to power and our nation's highest elected office and his fall can be partially explained by his rhetorical approach as a "politician-preacher." Although his use of religion proved instrumental in a rhetorical situation in 1976 that required a trustworthy, moral candidate, Carter's failure to produce results as perceived by many in 1980, meant that he, too, could not restore "trust" in government. The 1980 electorate believed that a "new voice" was crying in the political wilderness - another presidential candidate who used a

religious idiom, Ronald Reagan. But Reagan's use of religious discourse in the political arena more comfortably fit within the realm of the abstract, generic American civil religion. Reagan had not been nurtured in the tradition of oral preaching like Carter. His speeches were not deductive sermonic texts. Maybe Reagan, or at least his advisers and speechwriters, understood that "balance" between religion and politics. For the record, after Reagan's landslide victory over the incumbent Carter in 1980, he maintained his political run through the 1984 election and insured that his Vice-President George Bush would succeed him in 1988.

The 1980 election seems to indicate that part of the explanation for Reagan's success was his rhetorical skill. Much attention has been given to Reagan as the Great Communicator. To understand Carter more fully, it would be helpful to compare Carter with Reagan in terms of their rhetorical choices and styles. Rod Hart has offered such comparisons in two recent studies.

Hart's The Sound of Leadership (1987) examined macrorhetorical trends in presidential speechmaking from Truman to Reagan, 1945-1985. His method included cataloging and coding the speeches of those eight presidents. Attention was given to such factors as year in office, location of speech, topic, social setting, and so forth. His thesis was that presidents make rhetorical

decisions and that such speaking often constitutes social action on the part of the president. According to Hart speechmaking is an essential presidential tool--"one of the key conclusions of my investigations is this: public speech no longer attends the processes of governance--it is governance" (1987, p. 14). Hart's data is particularly helpful in comparing one president's rhetorical choices to another. For example, Reagan chose briefings 21% more than Carter. Reagan spoke on economics 2 1/2 times more than Carter and 2 times more on international conflict. Carter used multiple topics in speech situations 3 times more than Reagan. Carter also spoke at a greater percentage of organizational meetings, political rallies, and ceremonies than Reagan (pp. 234-235).

Polls consistently indicated that Carter's popularity lessened with each year in office. Hart's commentary upon that decline is that "as far as the opinion analysts are concerned, rhetoric was hardly Jimmy Carter's savior" (Hart, 1987, p. 87). In contrast, "Ronald Reagan was well prepared to cope with the 'rhetorical reflex'; indeed, he may well have been chosen for office because he possessed this reflex" (p. 39).

Hart's Verbal Style and the Presidency: A Computer-Based Analysis (1984) offers a microscopic rhetorical study of the last eight presidents from Truman to Reagan. His computerized language analysis uses four major dictionaries

and seven minor dictionaries. The major dictionaries include statements that indicate activity, optimism, certainty, and realism. The minor dictionaries include word selections that indicate embellishment, self-reference, variety, familiarity, human interest, complexity, and symbolism (pp. 16-17).

Hart reported that Carter's high deployment of optimism and his buoyancy "has been linked to his religious fundamentalism" by numerous commentators (1984, p. 156). In addition, "Carter also seemed ill-served by his idealistic talk. His style was termed fit for a 'moral presidency' but not one conducive to political action" (p. 157). He described Carter as "one of the least forceful of our modern presidents, the president best able to analyze the nation's problems, but seemingly the president least able to solve them. Carter failed to inspire, he failed to use the language of polical leadership" (p. 159).

In his speeches Carter used a technical vocabulary which was probably enhanced by his engineering background. In terms of complexity, Carter's words typically ran 5.89 characters in length, compared with the 4.65 average for other presidents, with some of his speeches reaching the level of 7.5 characters per word. Hart stated that "Carter was a pedagogue's dream and a citizen's nightmare" (1984, p. 161).

Carter used self-references more than any other modern president except for Richard Nixon. His speeches on pragmatic topics contained "significantly more self-references than his other remarks" (Hart, 1984, p. 164). It is likely that this dimension was influenced by the personal mandate that brought Carter to office. The overuse of self-reference can create a superpersonalized rhetoric which "makes for a moving target" (Hart, 1984, p. 165). It is likely that his overuse of self-reference heightened his level of identification and personal accountability with issues and problems such as the Panama Canal treaty negotiation and the Iran hostage crisis.

Hart's study found that Carter "significantly increased his use of symbolism and significantly decreased his use of realism. In other words, the presidency increasingly returned Carter to his roots as a Bible-toting moralist" (p. 178). Hart's conclusions about Carter from a rhetorical perspective included the observation that he never found his presidential voice. Even though Carter worked diligently over his speeches, he did "not find a consistently attractive public persona" and he was "not able to combine the various elements of language that many Americans expect a president to combine" (1984, p. 168).

Hart admits to a measure of cynicism in the rhetorical model. He has said that such a model "acknowledges that the American people can turn out of office an admittedly

pleasant fellow like Jimmy Carter because he could not persuade them that he could continue to persuade them" (1984, p. 6). Ironically, our rejection of Carter in 1980 may say more about us than it does about Carter.

Lou Cannon, a Reagan biographer, said that Reagan "regarded a public speech as a 'theatrical event'" (Hart, 1984, p. 213). It is most likely that this adeptness was due to his work as an actor. Hart (1984) describes Reagan as a 'prairie orator':

> From a technical standpoint, Ronald Reagan does very little with language per se. His masterstroke lies beyond his words--there in his smile, in his soft voice, in his physical presence. Ronald Reagan communicates sentiments, not ideas. He gives us the sense that he has something special up his sleeve and yet that he is but one American among many. (p. 215)

Ironically, Reagan's speeches produced the highest activity level of any modern president while using less realism and certainty than any of the eight. Cannon identified his "patriotism" and "idealism" as among his rhetorical strengths. It seemed that Reagan talked about doing and that seemed synonymous with "doing."

Much of Reagan's rhetorical effectiveness resulted from his "safe overstatement, the invocation of national symbols, and the deployment of folksy terminology" (Hart, 1984, p. 227). His homespun style allowed him to be reductionistic about complicated topics and to gloss over unpleasant facts and contradictions (Hart, 1984, p. 222). As Hart has characterized Reagan he "sighted fair weather

when he spoke" (1984, p. 227). Carter talked about sacrifice, accepting shortages, turning down thermostats, and living on less. It is not surprising that the electorate chose Reagan over Carter. It seems that "Carter may have taught us more about ourselves than any of his precursors in the White House. The lesson appears to be this: the American people cannot tolerate for long a passive, thoughtful chief executive" (Hart, 1984, p. 172).

CHAPTER SEVEN

Discussion and Suggestions for Further Research

Discussion

After examining the nine speech texts, it is evident that Carter's discourse was consistent with his evangelical, Baptist Christian background. Carter's employment of religious language ideas, formats, and his spiritual world-view illustrates well James D. Barber's theory of the President-as-person adapting his own rhetorical patterns to the political situation. Carter's born-again Christianity influenced his discourse in profound pervasive ways in both his ceremonial speeches, such as his inaugural address or the Camp David peace treaty signing, and his crisis speeches related to the energy crisis and the national malaise. Carter's discourse suggested that he viewed practical, managerial issues from a moral or spiritual perspective. Moreover, it seemed that Carter defined "moral" from a religious standpoint rather than one of secular ethics. The God he spoke about was the personalized God of Protestantism, active and present in events. Of particular importance was his identification of himself as a Christian, his use of Biblical images and references as prooftexts, and his use of patently religious words such as rebirth, healing, suffering, and stewardship. Furthermore, Carter used the jeremiad, the first-person

testimony or witness, and other sermon-like elements. Even in his most ecumenical opportunities such as the Camp David peace treaty signing, Carter's discourse was clearly partisan. It seemed that he could not escape his religious frame. Because of its special code, its relevance to a particular constituency, Carter's religious rhetoric may be indicted as a violation of the norms of American civil religion. Throughout his speaking and writing, his spiritual world-view and his religious sensibilities seemed to be an integral part of his thinking, therefore an integral part of his political discourse both as candidate and president.

Furthermore, Carter's rhetoric created problems that outlasted his administration. In 1976 as an outsider and a relatively unknown political candidate Carter could speak with the idealistic bold strokes of what he could do in the oval office. In 1980 as the incumbent President, Carter found himself in a precarious position to defend himself and to account for those promises that he had made in 1976. By 1980 Carter lacked support from within his own Democratic party, and the Republican candidate Reagan was gaining in the polls. Dan Hahn has explained this shift from the perspective of Carter's religious rhetoric:

> By 1980 his religiosity could not save the presidency for him. In addition to the problems it had caused with the electorate in general, he even lost ground amongst the evangelicals. In part that was because he had been a disappointment to them, for instance with his refusal to support an anti-abortion constitutional

> amendment; more importantly, however, his opponent was also a born-again evangelical Christian . . . and one whose conservatism was more appealing to the evangelical movement than was Carter's moderation. (Hahn, 1984, p. 281)

The Democrats were faced with a formidable challenge from a neoconservative movement that was sweeping across the nation. While Carter sounded like one of the religious "good guys," his policies were not in accord with those of the New Right. His disappointed Southern Christian constituents now rallied around the conservative and also "born-again" Ronald Reagan. Reagan's platform reflected the agenda of a growing neoconservative, religious, pro-life constituency within the Republican Party. Without careful study one cannot characterize Reagan's degree of compliance with civil-religious norms. Superficial inspection indicates that Reagan's use of religion in his political discourse is more conventionally abstract, seemingly within the 'comfortable' range of American civil religion. Reagan's religious appeal seemed much more acceptable because it inspired and moved people whereas Carter's religious rhetoric invited conviction, guilt, and denunciation.

It could be argued that it was Ronald Reagan's skill and success in using American civil religion that brought it back in its normal range, back to the balance of the rhetorical contract. Reagan's landslide victory in 1980 over Carter continued with an easy win over Carter's vice-

president Walter Mondale in 1984. In 1988 neither religious candidates Pat Robertson nor Jesse Jackson could secure a bid for the presidency. It might be that both Robertson and Jackson were even more closely aligned with a particular religious tradition than Carter. In 1988 George Bush did, however, employ a range of issues that tapped a religious dimension for many voters - school prayer, the pledge of allegiance, the American flag, and patriotism. Whether the old contract will be renewed or honored is unclear at this writing.

Implications

Five implications emerge from this study of the presidential rhetoric of Jimmy Carter. First, the boundaries of the civil-religious contract seem to have become more fluid to include issues that were not traditionally part of its domain. The traditional issues of family, small business, and privatism have become associated with the religious right. Just as, according to Thomas Edsall, welfare, busing, taxes, and quotas got tied to the Democrats, patriotism got linked to religion so that both now evoke a whole chain of images and feelings, a "chain-reaction" (Edsall, 1991, pp. 198-206).

Second, religious issues have become part of political agendas. The politicizing of such issues as abortion has circumvented public debate of critical issues.

Third, since 1976 and Carter's born-again talk and the reframing of discourse into religious categories, religious groups have become increasingly politicized. The rise of televangelism and groups like Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority, the Religious Roundtable, and the National Christian Political Action Campaign have given fundamentalists and evangelicals considerable political clout even as mainstream Protestant groups seem to decline.

Fourth, it is recognized that the origins of political action among religious groups date back to the 1950s with the entry of black politicians using the black church in politics as a powerful staging area and a reservoir of protest. It could be argued that black religion created the language and tactics for political protest. If this is the case then the right wing entry into politics in the mid-1970s was a delayed reaction.

Fifth, as Kathleen Jamieson has articulated, the main message delivery system now is advertising, particularly mass-mediated political advertisements. The changes in the religious-civic equation that has encouraged the reduction of complex socio-ethical issues to their politicized and "religious" components have made these issues more accessible to advertising vehicles. Instead of receiving enough information to make a informed choice or decision, political advertising offers us at best less information.

Suggestions for Future Research

This present study focused upon the presidential rhetoric of Jimmy Carter with attention given to the rhetorical contract between the sacred and the secular. Certainly there are a number of further studies that could provide additional insight into the questions and answers raised by this study. Further studies could include the following topics:

(1) A detailed study of Ronald Reagan's employment of religious imagery and religious language forms in his presidential speeches.

(2) A comparison of the rhetoric of Jimmy Carter with that of contemporary religious leaders such as Billy Graham or Jerry Falwell.

(3) A rhetorical study of President George Bush who represents traditional High Church Mainline Protestantism. Has his discourse managed to honor the separation of church and state while only marginally alienating the religious right and their political agenda? The challenge from Pat Buchanan in 1992 might provide insight in a comparison of the 1988 and 1992 presidential campaigns.

(4) What are the religious discourse "litmus tests" for political candidates that religious candidates might endorse?

(5) A comparative study of the discourse of various church leaders who led the prohibition fight early in this century

with contemporary religious leaders and the right-to-life movement.

(6) With our country becoming more culturally diverse and multiculturalism at the fore, what is the future of American civil-religious discourse?

(7) It seems that there is an apparent diminished religiosity in 1992 among presidential candidates, especially when compared to the presidential elections of 1976 - 1988. A detailed study of the presidential candidates' campaign discourse and their use of civil-religious discourse could be undertaken.

Conclusion

The boundaries between religion and politics may be forever blurred. The born-again Jimmy Carter certainly contributed to that blurring, with assistance from the press and the media. According to Gary Wills, "the religious vote has been, increasingly, an evangelical vote, a fact that helps explain the tendency of recent presidents to proclaim themselves born-again - Ford, Carter, Reagan, Bush" (Wills, 1990, p. 21). Moreoever, Wills has said that "while the pulpit is yielding to the lectern, religious creeds to secular programs, the appetite for moral guidance has not disappeared" (Wills, 1990, p. 36). The American people will continue to seek leadership, direction, guidance, and inspiration from their presidents. They will continue to seek their 'prophets, priests, and kings'--and,

as Richard John Neuhaus has said, someone will be providing the 'clothing' for our Naked Public Square.

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VITA

Michael James Adee was born in Billings, Montana on April 21, 1955. He had the good fortune of wonderful parents, Larry and Doris, and one older brother, Steve. He majored in speech communication at Louisiana State University and graduated with a B.S. in 1977.

He moved to Fort Worth, Texas and worked at The Hill School and Tarrant County Junior College while completing his Master of Divinity degree at Southwestern Seminary in 1981. He then completed a one-year clinical residency in counseling while he served as a hospital chaplain at the Memorial Hospital in Cumberland, Maryland.

In 1982 he left for Africa to serve as a teacher and relief worker. He lived in Harare, Zimbabwe until 1984. After working at the University of Nevada, Reno, he decided to return to Louisiana for graduate study.

In 1986 he entered the Department of Speech Communication in order to begin his doctoral study. He worked as a graduate assistant there until 1990. He served as public relations director, volunteer, and board member for the Baton Rouge Friends for Life, an organization founded to support persons with HIV/AIDS. He was invited to present part of his dissertation study at the Eighth Presidential Conference on Jimmy Carter at Hofstra University, New York, in November, 1990. He had just

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DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

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Major Field: Speech Communication

Title of Dissertation: American Civil Relgion and the Presidential Rhetoric of Jimmy Carter

Approved:

Major Professor and Chairman

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

Date of Examination:

May 19, 1992